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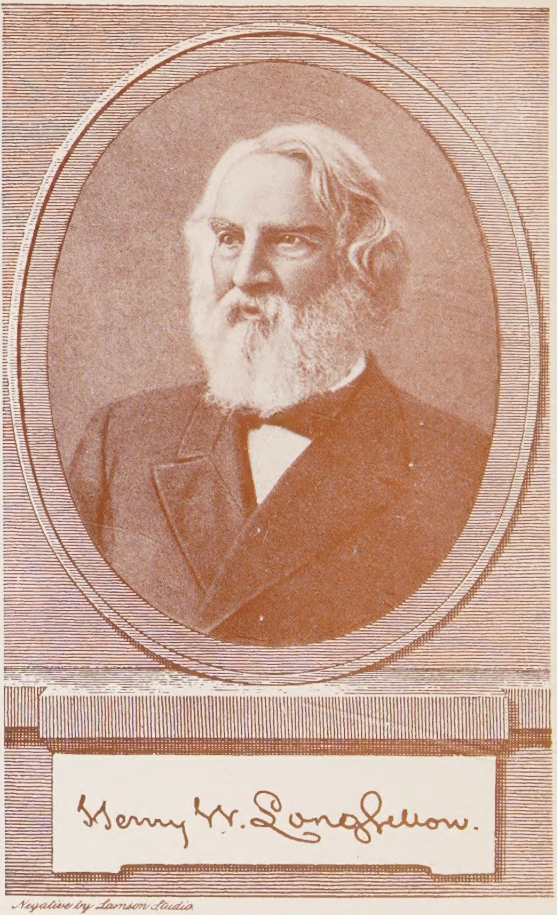

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THE
POCKET UNIVERSITY
VOLUME XIV

POETRY
DESCRIPTIVE AND REFLECTIVE VERSE

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ASSISTED BY
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CONTENTS

		PAGE
Introduction		3
The Interpretation of Nature		
L'Allegro	*Milton*	9
Il Penseroso	*Milton*	14
The Garden	*Marvell*	20
Frost at Midnight	*Coleridge*	22
Sunrise	*Lanier*	25
A Forest Hymn	*Bryant*	34
Waldeinsamkeit	*Emerson*	39
The Oak	*Tennyson*	41
A Strip of Blue	*Larcom*	42
On a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm	*Wordsworth*	44
Tintern Abbey	*Wordsworth*	47
Yarrow Unvisited	*Wordsworth*	53
The Marshes of Glynn	*Lanier*	55
Lines written among the Euganean Hills	*Shelley*	61
Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples	*Shelley*	73
The Isles of Greece	*Byron*	75
A Small, Sweet Idyl	*Tennyson*	79
Kubla Khan	*Coleridge*	80
The Forging of the Anchor	*Ferguson*	82
Seaweed	*Longfellow*	88
The Cloud	*Shelley*	90
The Snow-storm	*Emerson*	93
Early Spring	*Tennyson*	94
Rain in Summer	*Longfellow*	96
Song of the Brook	*Tennyson*	99
February	*Morris*	102
March	*Morris*	103

Contents

		PAGE
May	*Morris*	104
October	*Morris*	105
The Green Linnet	*Wordsworth*	106
The Chambered Nautilus	*Holmes*	108
To a Mountain Daisy	*Burns*	109
The Small Celandine	*Wordsworth*	112
The Wild Honeysuckle	*Freneau*	113
To the Fringed Gentian	*Bryant*	114
The Rhodora	*Emerson*	115
To the Dandelion	*Lowell*	115
The Death of the Flowers	*Bryant*	118
Out of the Cradle endlessly Rocking	*Whitman*	120
Portraits of People		
The Men of Old	*Houghton*	133
The Lotos-Eaters	*Tennyson*	135
The Sower	*Lowell*	144
Robin Hood	*Keats*	146
To Wordsworth	*Landor*	148
Memorabilia	*Browning*	151
To Robert Browning	*Landor*	151
On a Bust of Dante	*Parsons*	152
Ichabod	*Whittier*	154
There was a Boy	*Wordsworth*	156
Ruth	*Hood*	157
Stepping Westward	*Wordsworth*	158
"She was a Phantom of Delight"	*Wordsworth*	159
The Solitary Reaper	*Wordsworth*	160
Mariana	*Tennyson*	162
The Village Blacksmith	*Longfellow*	165
The Last Leaf	*Holmes*	167
The Barefoot Boy	*Whittier*	169
Poems in Character		
Ulysses	*Tennyson*	175
Abt Vogler	*Browning*	177
Sir Galahad	*Tennyson*	184
Two in the Campagna	*Browning*	187
A Woman's Last Word	*Browning*	189

Contents

		PAGE
Rabbi Ben Ezra	*Browning*	191
Saul	*Browning*	199
Verses	*Cowper*	221
Locksley Hall	*Tennyson*	223
Antony to Cleopatra	*Lytle*	238
The Last Buccaneer	*Kingsley*	240
Life's Philosophy		
The World	*Vaughan*	245
A Psalm of Life	*Longfellow*	247
The Beleaguered City	*Longfellow*	249
Influence of Natural Objects	*Wordsworth*	251
Lines	*Wordsworth*	253
Home	*Beaumont*	256
The Character of a Happy Life	*Wotton*	258
Will	*Tennyson*	259
Life	*Barbauld*	260
"My Days Among the Dead are Past"	*Southey*	261
Each and All	*Emerson*	262
Youth and Age	*Coleridge*	264
The Forerunners	*Emerson*	265
Terminus	*Emerson*	267
The Problem	*Emerson*	268
Brahma	*Emerson*	271
In a Lecture-room	*Clough*	272
"Say not the Struggle Nought Availeth"	*Clough*	272
Self-dependence	*Arnold*	273
The Future	*Arnold*	275
Palladium	*Arnold*	278
Dover Beach	*Arnold*	279
Growing Old	*Arnold*	281
What Rabbi Jehosha Said	*Lowell*	282
The End of the Play	*Thackeray*	283

Selections from the Later Poetry

Interpretation of Nature		
Wings	*Bates*	289
Salute to the Trees	*Van Dyke*	290

Contents

		PAGE
The Chant of the Colorado	*Rice*	291
A Dead Harvest	*Meynell*	292
Check	*Stephens*	293
Portraits of People		
The Man with the Hoe	*Markham*	294
Lincoln, the Man of the People	*Markham*	296
Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight	*Lindsay*	298
The Gipsy Girl	*Hodgson*	299
Songs for My Mother	*Branch*	300
Vickery's Mountain	*Robinson*	303
Old Grey Squirrel	*Noyes*	306
Isaiah Beethoven	*Masters*	308
Richard Cory	*Robinson*	309
Poems in Character		
The Fiddler of Dooney	*Yeats*	310
An Old Woman of the Roads	*Colum*	311
She Hears the Storm	*Hardy*	312
"Grandmither, Think Not I Forget"	*Cather*	313
Harold before Senlac	*Phillips*	315
Life's Philosophy		
Souls	*Davis*	317
The Happiest Heart	*Cheney*	318

DESCRIPTIVE AND REFLECTIVE VERSE

INTRODUCTION

A GREAT many of the most interesting and, ultimately, the most valuable short poems in English literature show the poet in his function of prophet and seer. He looks out upon nature and his fellow-men and in upon his own soul, with its complex of aspiration and disappointment, and in all this bewildering circumstance he sees further than other men see; he teaches them how to meet the issues of life, or presents by his imagination, in Ruskin's phrase, "noble grounds for noble emotions." In this conception the poet is an interpreter, actuated not only by emotion and the gift of expression but by insight and wisdom. No other function of the poet is more universally recognized. Poet and prophet were the same with the Hebrews, and no men now are more truly infidels than those who deny the wisdom of the poets. The key to the composition of this volume is that these poems are interpretative. They are various in aspect and in temper; but in all of them the poet is making his "perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of things." The poetry, here, is not the spontaneous outburst of the poet's heart; it softens that, and adds to it a

remoter charm bestowed by contemplation. This is perhaps the very noblest function of the lyric poet, that he shall thus translate into thought the emotions of his heart.

Most of the poems here are lyrics and consequently freely varying in form. A few of the character pieces have a strong dramatic quality and some reflective verse is but poorly covered by the term lyric at the best. It is interesting to see the larger proportion, as compared with the volume of pure lyrics, of blank verse and of other linked and continued measures. As the emotional element of the verse becomes less intense, the melody becomes gentler and less obtrusive,—in other words, form and content are not to be divorced.

The first section of the volume contains poems which interpret nature, the "breath and finer spirit" of things seen and heard. Contemplative geniuses, like Wordsworth, offer the typical poems. That dictum of his, finely descriptive of his own method, but not, as he supposed, of the universal mood of poetic creation, shows the prevailing temper of the descriptive poems in this volume. "Poetry," he says, "is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, taking its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." This translation of the heart of nature, this application of its sights and sounds to our situation in the world, is characteristic of all great nature poets. Burns sees his own fate in the daisy perishing beneath his plow. Lanier glories in Sun and Sunrise with

a feeling intense and personal. The slow-moving reverent fidelity of Wordsworth shows us that he is trying to express what nature has actually wrought upon his emotions. The descriptive method of their poems is not enumerative or topographical. By virtue of the transformation in the mind of the poet they are more strictly selective and suggestive than other poetry. The image comes back robbed of inessential features and endowed with its true significance.

The remarks just made about descriptive lyrics apply also to the second section of this volume. It is made up of a group of portraits of people. Human figures are there described in a manner analogous to that of the nature pieces mentioned above. They are not individualized but contemplated and interpreted. With Wordsworth, in *The Solitary Reaper* and *Stepping Westward,* for example, the figures seem to lose personality and become merely features of the landscape. In Longfellow and Whittier the figures often represent trades and classes. Other poems like *The Lotos-Eaters, The Men of Old,* and *Robin Hood* are finely romantic. Others, like Hood's *Ruth,* are idyllic. A few, like *On a Bust of Dante, Memorabilia,* and several poems addressed to poets and people, are personal lyrics inspired by the contemplation of other men.

The third section of the volume presents considerable contrast in temper to the first two. It is made up of character pieces of the less dramatic sort, those in which action and situation

are not so important as to make the dramatic element overpowering. They are, for the most part, reflective poems uttered from the point of view of another person, and therefore doubly illuminative. The dramatic element is perhaps very small in a poem like *Locksley Hall;* but, according to Tennyson's own statement to the editor of these volumes, he was not speaking for himself, but had assumed in the poem the point of view of the open-eyed and sanguine, albeit disappointed and rather cynical, young man who speaks the lines. In other poems, like *Ulysses*, the dramatic element is much greater, but none of them is, properly speaking, a dramatic monologue. They are too far removed from the conventionality of the drama.

The final section of the volume is taken up with reflective verse. The elegies and hymns are in another volume, so also are the odes. A good deal of the more obviously reflective verse is therefore elsewhere provided for. There remains, however, a considerable quantity which deals with life's philosophy. The best of it comes from the last century; for just as it is the sort of verse to be expected from a period of wide-spread spiritual endeavor, so this lyrical century has been very exacting in its demands upon reflective verse. Almost none will be found here which is not highly emotionalized, and intensely personal in its nature.

HARDIN CRAIG.

THE INTERPRETATION OF NATURE

I

L'ALLEGRO

HENCE, loathèd Melancholy,
  Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn,
  'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and
    sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
  Where brooding Darkness spreads his
    jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
  There, under ebon shades and low-browed
    rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
  In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,

There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:

Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savoury dinner set

Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
  Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lanthorn led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubbar fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.

Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear

Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

1632? 1645. *John Milton.*

II

IL PENSEROSO

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,

Or that starred Ethiop Queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;

But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering Moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,

Or the Bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those Dæmons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what Love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass

On which the Tartar King did ride;
And if aught else great Bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from Day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.

And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid.
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell,
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

1632? 1645. *John Milton.*

THE GARDEN

How vainly men themselves amaze,
To win the palm, the oak, or bays;
And their incessant labours see
Crown'd from some single herb or tree,
Whose short and narrow-vergéd shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all the flowers and trees do close,
To weave the garlands of Repose.

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence thy sister dear?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow;
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So amorous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name:
Little, alas, they know or heed
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees! wheres'e'er your bark I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race;
Apollo hunted Daphne so
Only that she might laurel grow;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
Withdraws into its happiness;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas,
Annihilating all that 's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;

There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and combs its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state
While man there walk'd without a mate:
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 't was beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 't were in one,
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skilful gardener drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new!
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run,
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd, but with herbs and flowers?

1681. *Andrew Marvell.*

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,

Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'T is calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, everywhere
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering *stranger!* and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fairday,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!

So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my
dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,
Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Sunrise

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

1798. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

SUNRISE

In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship, fain
Of the live-oak, the marsh, and the main.
The little green leaves would not let me alone in my sleep;
Up-breathed from the marshes, a message of range and of sweep,
Interwoven with wafters of wild sea-liberties, drifting,
Came through the lapped leaves sifting, sifting,
Came to the gates of sleep.
Then my thoughts, in the dark of the dungeon-keep
Of the Castle of Captives hid in the City of Sleep,

Upstarted, by twos and by threes assembling;
The gates of sleep fell a-trembling
Like as the lips of a lady that forth falter *yes,*
Shaken with happiness:
The gates of sleep stood wide.

I have waked, I have come, my beloved! I might not abide:
I have come ere the dawn, O beloved, my live-oaks, to hide
In your gospelling glooms,—to be
As a lover in heaven, the marsh my marsh and the sea my sea.

Tell me, sweet burly-barked, man-embodied Tree
That mine arms in the dark are embracing, dost know
From what fount are these tears at thy feet which flow?
They rise not from reason, but deeper inconsequent deeps.
Reason 's not one that weeps.
What logic of greeting lies
Betwixt dear over-beautiful trees and the rain of the eyes?

O cunning green leaves, little masters! like as ye gloss
All the dull-tissued dark with your luminous darks that emboss

The vague blackness of night into pattern
and plan,
So,
(But would I could know, but would I
could know,)
With your question embroidering the dark of
the question of man,—
So, with your silences purfling this silence of man
While his cry to the dead for some knowledge
is under the ban,
Under the ban,—
So, ye have wrought me
Designs on the night of our knowledge,—yea,
ye have taught me,
So,
That haply we know somewhat more than we
know.

Ye lispers, whisperers, singers in storms,
Ye consciences murmuring faiths under
forms,
Ye ministers meet for each passion that
grieves,
Friendly, sisterly, sweetheart leaves,
Oh, rain me down from your darks that contain
me
Wisdoms ye winnow from winds that pain me,—
Sift down tremors of sweet-within-sweet
That advise me of more than they bring,—repeat
Me the woods-smell that swiftly but now brought
breath
From the heaven-side bank of the river of death,—

Teach me the terms of silence,—preach me
The passion of patience,—sift me,—impeach
me,—
And there, oh there
As ye hang with your myriad palms upturned
in the air,
Pray me a myriad prayer.
My gossip, the owl,—is it thou
That out of the leaves of the low-hanging
bough,
As I pass to the beach, art stirred?
Dumb woods, have ye uttered a bird?
. . . . . .
Reverend Marsh, low-couched along the sea,
Old chemist, rapt in alchemy,
Distilling silence,—lo,
That which our father-age had died to know—
The menstruum that dissolves all
matter—thou
Hast found it; for this silence, filling now
The globèd charity of receiving space,
This solves us all: man, matter, doubt, disgrace,
Death, love, sin, sanity,
Must in yon silence, clear solution lie,—
Too clear! That crystal nothing who 'll peruse?
The blackest night could bring us brighter news.
Yet precious qualities of silence haunt
Round these vast margins, ministrant.
Oh, if thy soul 's at latter gasp for space,
With trying to breathe no bigger than thy race
Just to be fellowed, when that thou hast found
No man with room, or grace enough of bound,

To entertain that New thou tellst, thou art,—
'T is here, 't is here, thou canst unhand thy heart
And breathe it free, and breathe it free,
By rangy marsh, in lone sea-liberty.

The tide 's at full; the marsh with flooded streams
Glimmers, a limpid labyrinth of dreams.
Each winding creek in grave entrancement lies
A rhapsody of morning-stars. The skies
Shine scant with one forked galaxy,—
The marsh brags ten: looped on his breast they lie.

Oh, what if sound should be made!
Oh, what if a bound should be laid
To this bow-and-string tension of beauty and silence a-spring,—
To the bend of beauty the bow, or the hold of silence the string!
I fear me, I fear me yon dome of diaphanous gleam
Will break as a bubble o'er-blown in a dream,—
Yon dome of too-tenuous tissues of space and night,
Over-weighted with stars, over-freighted with light,
Over-sated with beauty and silence, will seem
But a bubble that broke in a dream,
If a bound of degree to this grace be laid,
Or a sound or a motion made.

But no: it is made: list! somewhere,—mystery,
where?
In the leaves? in the air?
In my heart? is a motion made:
'T is a motion of dawn, like a flicker of shade
on shade.
In the leaves 't is palpable: low multitudinous
stirring
Upwinds through the woods; the little ones,
softly conferring,
Have settled my lord's to be looked for; so,
they are still;
But the air and my heart and the earth are
a-thrill,—
And look where the wild duck sails round the
bend of the river,—
And look where a passionate shiver
Expectant is bending the blades
Of the marsh-grass in serial shimmers and
shades,—
And invisible wings, fast fleeting, fast fleeting,
Are beating
The dark overhead as my heart beats,—and
steady and free
Is the ebb-tide flowing from marsh to sea—
(Run home, little streams,
With your lapfuls of stars and dreams),—
And a sailor unseen is hoisting a-peak,
For list, down the inshore curve of the creek
How merrily flutters the sail,—
And lo, in the East! Will the East unveil?

The East is unveiled, the East hath confessed
A flush: 't is dead; 't is alive: 't is dead, ere
the West
Was aware of it: nay, 't is abiding, 't is unwith-
drawn:
Have a care, sweet Heaven! 'T is Dawn.

Now a dream of a flame through that dream of
a flush is uprolled:
To the zenith ascending, a dome of un-
dazzling gold
Is builded, in shape as a bee-hive, from out of
the sea:
The hive is of gold undazzling, but oh, the Bee,
The star-fed Bee, the build-fire Bee,
Of dazzling gold is the great Sun-Bee
That shall flash from the hive-hole over the
sea.

Yet now the dewdrop, now the morning
gray,
Shall live their little lucid sober day
Ere with the sun their souls exhale away.
Now in each pettiest personal sphere of dew
The summed moon shines complete as in the blue
Big dewdrop of all heaven: with these lit shrines
O'er silvered to the farthest sea-confines,
The sacramental marsh one pious plain
Of worship lies. Peace to the ante-reign
Of Mary Morning, blissful mother mild,
Minded of nought but peace, and of a child,

Not slower than Majesty moves, for a mean
and a measure
Of motion,—not faster than dateless Olympian
leisure
Might pace with unblown ample garments from
pleasure to pleasure,—
The wave-serrate sea-rim sinks unjarring,
unreeling,
Forever revealing, revealing, revealing,
Edgewise, bladewise, halfwise, wholewise,—'t is
done!
Good-morrow, Lord Sun!
With several voice, with ascription one,
The woods and the marsh and the sea and my
soul
Unto thee, whence the glittering stream of all
morrows doth roll,
Cry good and past good and most heavenly
morrow, Lord Sun.

O Artisan born in the purple,—Workman **Heat,—**
Parter of passionate atoms that travail to **meet**
And be mixed in the death-cold oneness,—
innermost Guest
At the marriage of elements,—fellow of pub-
licans,—blest
King in the blouse of flame, that loiterest o'er
The idle skies yet laborest past evermore,—
Thou, in the fine forge-thunder, thou, in the beat
Of the heart of a man, thou Motive,—Laborer
Heat:

Yea, Artist, thou, of whose art yon sea 's all news,
With his inshore greens and manifold mid-sea blues,
Pearl-glint, shell-tint, ancientest, perfectest hues
Ever shaming the maidens,—lily and rose
Confess thee, and each mild flame that glows
In the clarified virginal bosoms of stones that shine,
It is thine, it is thine:

Thou chemist of storms, whether driving the winds a-swirl
Or a-flicker the subtiler essences polar that whirl
In the magnet earth,—yea, thou with a storm for a heart,
Rent with debate, many-spotted with question, part
From part oft sundered, yet ever a globed light,
Yet ever the artist, ever more large and bright
Than the eye of a man may avail of:—manifold One,
I must pass from the face, I must pass from the face of the Sun:
Old Want is awake and agog, every wrinkle a-frown;
The worker must pass to his work in the terrible town:
But I fear not, nay, and I fear not the thing to be done;
I am strong with the strength of my lord the Sun:

How dark, how dark soever the race that must needs be run,
I am lit with the Sun.

Oh, never the mast-high run of the seas
Of traffic shall hide thee,
Never the hell-colored smoke of the factories
Hide thee,
Never the reek of the time's fen-politics
Hide thee,
And ever my heart through the night shall with knowledge abide thee,
And ever by day shall my spirit, as one that hath tried thee,
Labor, at leisure, in art,—till yonder beside thee
My soul shall float, friend Sun,
The day being done.

1882. *Sidney Lanier.*

A FOREST HYMN

The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them—ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down.
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks

And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences
Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised? Let me, at least,
Here, in the shadow of this aged wood,
Offer one hymn—thrice happy if it find
Acceptance in His ear.

Father, thy hand
Hath reared these venerable columns, thou
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down
Upon the naked earth, and forthwith rose
All these fair ranks of trees. They in thy sun
Budded, and shook their green leaves in thy breeze,
And shot towards heaven. The century-living crow,
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and died
Among their branches, till at last they stood,
As now they stand, massy and tall and dark,

Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold
Communion with his Maker. These dim vaults,
These winding aisles, of human pomp or pride
Report not. No fantastic carvings show
The boast of our vain race to change the form
Of thy fair works. But thou art here—thou fill'st
The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds
That run along the summit of these trees
In music; thou art in the cooler breath
That from the inmost darkness of the place
Comes, scarcely felt; the barky trunks, the ground,
The fresh moist ground, are all instinct with thee.
Here is continual worship;—Nature, here,
In the tranquillity that thou dost love,
Enjoys thy presence. Noiselessly around,
From perch to perch, the solitary bird
Passes; and yon clear spring, that, midst its herbs,
Wells softly forth and wandering steeps the roots
Of half the mighty forest, tells no tale
Of all the good it does. Thou hast not left
Thyself without a witness, in the shades,
Of thy perfections. Grandeur, strength, and grace
Are here to speak of thee. This mighty oak—
By whose immovable stem I stand and seem
Almost annihilated—not a prince,
In all that proud old world beyond the deep,

E'er wore his crown as loftily as he
Wears the green coronal of leaves with which
Thy hand has graced him. Nestled at his root
Is beauty, such as blooms not in the glare
Of the broad sun. That delicate forest flower
With scented breath and look so like a smile,
Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mould,
An emanation of the indwelling Life,
A visible token of the upholding Love,
That are the soul of this great universe.

My heart is awed within me when I think
Of the great miracle that still goes on,
In silence, round me,—the perpetual work
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed
Forever. Written on thy works I read
The lesson of thy own eternity.
Lo! all grow old and die—but see again,
How on the faltering footsteps of decay
Youth presses—ever gay and beautiful youth
In all its beautiful forms. These lofty trees
Wave not less proudly that their ancestors
Moulder beneath them. Oh, there is not lost
One of Earth's charms! upon her bosom yet,
After the flight of untold centuries,
The freshness of her far beginning lies
And yet shall lie. Life mocks the idle hate
Of his arch-enemy Death—yea, seats himself
Upon the tyrant's throne, the sepulchre,
And of the triumphs of his ghastly foe
Makes his own nourishment. For he came forth
From thine own bosom, and shall have no end.

There have been holy men who hid themselves
Deep in the woody wilderness, and gave
Their lives to thought and prayer, till they outlived
The generation born with them, nor seemed
Less aged than the hoary trees and rocks
Around them;—and there have been holy men
Who deemed it were not well to pass life thus.
But let me often to these solitudes
Retire, and in thy presence reassure
My feeble virtue. Here its enemies,
The passions, at thy plainer footsteps shrink
And tremble and are still. O God! when thou
Dost scare the world with tempests, set on fire
The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill,
With all the waters of the firmament,
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the woods
And drowns the villages; when, at thy call,
Uprises the great deep, and throws himself
Upon the continent, and overwhelms
Its cities—who forgets not, at the sight
Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by?
Oh, from these sterner aspects of thy face
Spare me and mine, nor let us need the wrath
Of the mad unchained elements to teach
Who rules them. Be it ours to meditate,
In these calm shades, thy milder majesty,
And to the beautiful order of thy works
Learn to conform the order of our lives.

1825. *William Cullen Bryant.*

WALDEINSAMKEIT

I do not count the hours I spend
In wandering by the sea;
The forest is my loyal friend,
Like God it useth me.

In plains that room for shadows make
Of skirting hills to lie,
Bound in by streams which give and take
Their colors from the sky;

Or on the mountain-crest sublime,
Or down the oaken glade,
O what have I to do with time?
For this the day was made.

Cities of mortals woe-begone
Fantastic care derides,
But in the serious landscape lone
Stern benefit abides.

Sheen will tarnish, honey cloy,
And merry is only a mask of sad,
But, sober on a fund of joy,
The woods at heart are glad.

There the great Planter plants
Of fruitful worlds the grain,
And with a million spells enchants
The souls that walk in pain.

Still on the seeds of all he made
The rose of beauty burns;
Through times that wear and forms
that fade,
Immortal youth returns.

The black ducks mounting from the lake,
The pigeon in the pines,
The bittern's boom, a desert make
Which no false art refines.

Down in yon watery nook,
Where bearded mists divide,
The gray old gods whom Chaos knew,
The sires of Nature, hide.

Aloft, in secret veins of air,
Blows the sweet breath of song,
O, few to scale those uplands dare,
Though they to all belong!

See thou bring not to field or stone
The fancies found in books;
Leave authors' eyes, and fetch your own,
To brave the landscape's looks.

The Oak

Oblivion here thy wisdom is,
Thy thrift, the sleep of cares;
For a proud idleness like this
Crowns all thy mean affairs.

1858. *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

THE OAK

Live thy Life,
  Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
  Living gold;

Summer-rich
  Then; and then
Autumn-changed,
Soberer-hued
  Gold again.

All his leaves
  Fallen at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough,
  Naked strength.

1889. *Lord Tennyson.*

A STRIP OF BLUE

I do not own an inch of land,
  But all I see is mine,—
The orchard and the mowing-fields,
  The lawns and gardens fine.
The winds my tax-collectors are,
  They bring me tithes divine,—
Wild scents and subtle essences,
  A tribute rare and free;
And, more magnificent than all,
  My window keeps for me
A glimpse of blue immensity,—
  A little strip of sea.

Richer am I than he who owns
  Great fleets and argosies;
I have a share in every ship
  Won by the inland breeze,
To loiter on yon airy road
  Above the apple-trees.
I freight them with my untold dreams;
  Each bears my own picked crew;
And nobler cargoes wait for them
  Than ever India knew,—
My ships that sail into the East
  Across that outlet blue.

Sometimes they seem like living shapes,—
  The people of the sky,—
Guests in white raiment coming down
  From heaven, which is close by:
I call them by familiar names,
  As one by one draws nigh.
So white so light, so spirit-like,
  From violets mists they bloom!
The aching wastes of the unknown
  Are half reclaimed from gloom,
Since on life's hospitable sea
  All souls find sailing-room.

The ocean grows a weariness,
  With nothing else in sight;
Its east and west, its north and south,
  Spread out from morn till night;
We miss the warm, caressing shore,
  Its brooding shade and light.
A part is greater than the whole;
  By hints are mysteries told.
The fringes of eternity,—
  God's sweeping garment-fold,
In that bright shred of glittering sea,
  I reach out for and hold.

The sails, like flakes of roseate pearl,
  Float in upon the mist;
The waves are broken precious stones,—
  Sapphire and amethyst
Washed from celestial basement walls,
  By suns unsetting kissed.

Out through the utmost gates of space,
  Past where the gray stars drift,
To the widening Infinite, my soul
  Glides on, a vessel swift,
Yet loses not her anchorage
  In yonder azure rift.

Here sit I, as a little child;
  The threshold of God's door
Is that clear band of chrysoprase;
  Now the vast temple floor,
The blinding glory of the dome
  I bow my head before.
Thy universe, O God, is home,
  In height or depth, to me;
Yet here upon thy footstool green
  Content am I to be,
Glad when is oped unto my need
  Some sea-like glimpse of Thee.

1880. *Lucy Larcom.*

ON A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!

Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house
divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made:

And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'t is so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore:
A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 't is a passionate Work!—yet wise and well,
Well chosen in the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armor of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!

Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 't is surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

1805. 1807. *William Wordsworth.*

TINTERN ABBEY

Five years have past; five summers, with the
length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-
springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion, and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-
tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little
lines

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessèd mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessèd mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, Oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the
woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished
thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was
when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days
And their glad animal movements all gone by)

To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thoughts supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I
still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world

Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make.
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free

To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh! then,
If solitude or fear or pain or grief
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—Oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

1798. *William Wordsworth.*

YARROW UNVISITED

From Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my *"winsome Marrow,"*
"Whate'er betide, we 'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 't is their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There 's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming
Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There 's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:

Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What 's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We 'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow,
Enough if in our hearts we know
There 's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We 'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we 're there, although 't is fair,
'T will be another Yarrow!

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'T will soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

1803. 1807. *William Wordsworth.*

THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform boughs,—
Emerald twilights,—
Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper of vows,

When lovers pace timidly down through the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach within
The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;—

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-day fire,—
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with wavering arras of leaves,—
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with good;—

O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades of the vine,
While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you fast in mine;
But now when the noon is no more, and riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down with the wood-aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a dream,—

Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken
soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the
wearisome sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of trade
is low,
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know
that I know,
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great
compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the sweep
of the marshes of Glynn
Will work me no fear like the fear they have
wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth was
but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary
unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of the
plain,—

Oh, now, afraid, I am fain to face
The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am
drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs, as a
belt of the dawn,
For a mete and a mark
To the forest-dark:—
So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low,—

Thus—with your favor—soft, with a reverent hand,
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of the land!)
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I stand
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world of sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the folds of the land.
Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl
As a silver-wrought garment that clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.

The Marshes of Glynn

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:

Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy.
The tide is at his highest height;
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the
waters sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below
when the tide comes in
On the length and breadth of the marvellous
marshes of Glynn.

1879. *Sidney Lanier.*

LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

Many a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above, the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail and cord and plank
Till the ship has almost drank

Death from the o'erbrimming deep;
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as, ever still
Longing with divided will,
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave
To the haven of the grave.
What, if there no friends will greet;
What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat;
Wander wheresoe'er he may,
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 't will wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no:
Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins and chill
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.
On the beach of a northern sea
Which tempests shake eternally,

Lines Written among Euganean Hills

As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,
One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones,
Where a few gray rushes stand,
Boundaries of the sea and land:
Nor is heard one voice of wail
But the sea-mews, as they sail
O'er the billows of the gale;
Or the whirlwind up and down
Howling, like a slaughtered town,
When a king in glory rides
Through the pomp of fratricides:
Those unburied bones around
There is many a mournful sound;
There is no lament for him,
Like a sunless vapor, dim,
Who once clothed with life and thought
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide agony:
To such a one this morn was led
My bark, by soft winds piloted.
'Mid the mountains Euganean
I stood listening to the pæan
With which the legioned rooks did hail
The sun's uprise majestical:
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Through the dewy mist they soar
Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,

Flecked with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,
So their plumes of purple grain,
Starred with drops of golden rain,
Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Through the broken mist they sail;
And the vapours cloven and gleaming
Follow down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright and clear and still
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair;
Underneath day's azure eyes,
Ocean's nursling, Venice, lies,—
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire
Shine like obelisks of fire,

Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise,
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt city! thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.
A less drear ruin then than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne among the waves
Wilt thou be when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace-gate
With green sea-flowers overgrown
Like a rock of ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandoned sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way
Wandering at the close of day
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,

Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid mask of death
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
Quivering through aërial gold,
As I now behold them here,
Would imagine not they were
Sepulchres, where human forms,
Like pollution-nourished worms
To the corpse of greatness cling,
Murdered, and now mouldering:
But if Freedom should awake
In her omnipotence, and shake
From the Celtic Anarch's hold
All the keys of dungeons cold,
Where a hundred cities lie
Chained like thee, ingloriously,
Thou and all thy sister band
Might adorn this sunny land,
Twining memories of old time
With new virtues more sublime;
If not, perish thou and they,
Clouds which stain truth's rising day
By her sun consumed away,
Earth can spare ye: while like flowers,
In the waste of years and hours,
From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming.
Perish—let there only be
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea

As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally,
One remembrance, more sublime
Than the tattered pall of time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;—
That a tempest-cleaving Swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung
From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit
Chastening terror:—what though yet
Poesy's unfailing River,
Which thro' Albion winds for ever
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred Poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled?
What though thou with all thy dead
Scarce can for this fame repay
Aught thine own? oh, rather say
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sunlike soul?
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespere's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscient power which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
As the love from Petrarch's urn,
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,

A quenchless lamp by which the heart
Sees things unearthly;—so thou art
Mighty spirit—so shall be
The City that did refuge thee.

Lo, the sun floats up the sky
Like thought-wingèd Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height;
From the sea a mist has spread,
And the beams of morn lie dead
On the towers of Venice now,
Like its glory long ago.
By the skirts of that gray cloud
Many-domèd Padua proud
Stands, a peopled solitude,
'Mid the harvest-shining plain,
Where the peasant heaps his grain
In the garner of his foe,
And the milk-white oxen slow
With the purple vintage strain,
Heaped upon the creaking wain,
That the brutal Celt may swill
Drunken sleep with savage will;
And the sickle to the sword
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
Like a weed whose shade is poison,
Overgrows this region's foison,
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
To destruction's harvest home:
Men must reap the things they sow,
Force from force must ever flow,

Or worse; but 't is a bitter woe
That love or reason cannot change
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

Padua, thou within whose walls
Those mute guests at festivals,
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
Played at dice for Ezzelin,
Till Death cried, "I win, I win!"
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
But Death promised, to assuage her,
That he would petition for
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
When the destined years were o'er,
Over all between the Po
And the eastern Alpine snow,
Under the mighty Austrian.
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
And since that time, ay, long before,
Both have ruled from shore to shore,
That incestuous pair, who follow
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
As Repentance follows Crime,
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor, whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betrayed and to betray:
Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,

When it lit not many a hearth
On this cold and gloomy earth:
Now new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by tyranny.
As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny dells,
One light flame among the brakes,
While the boundless forest shakes,
And its mighty trunks are torn
By the fire thus lowly born:
The spark beneath his feet is dead,
He starts to see the flames it fed
Howling through the darkened sky
With a myriad tongues victoriously,
And sinks down in fear: so thou,
O Tyranny, beholdest now
Light around thee, and thou hearest
The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
Grovel on the earth; ay, hide
In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now:
'T is the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist,
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvèd star,
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound,

Fills the overflowing sky;
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath; the leaves unsodden
Where the infant frost has trodden
With his morning-wingèd feet,
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines,
Piercing with their trellised lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
In the south dimly islanded;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread
High between the clouds and sun;
And of living things each one;
And my spirit, which so long
Darkened this swift stream of song,—
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky:
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odour, or the soul of all
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.
Noon descends, and after noon
Autumn's evening meets me soon,
Leading the infantine moon,
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister

Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs:
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like wingèd winds had borne
To that silent isle, which lies
Mid remembered agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being)
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of life and agony;
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulf; even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folded winds they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell 'mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine:
—We may live so happy there,
That the spirits of the air,
Envying us, may even entice
To our healing paradise

The polluting multitude;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies;
And the love which heals all strife,
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood:
They, not it, would change; and soon
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again!

1819. *Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might:
The breath of the moist earth is light

Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,—
The winds', the birds', the ocean-floods',—
The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,—
How sweet, did any heart now share in my emotion!

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that Content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned,—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne, and yet must bear,

Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last
monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament—for I am one
Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in
memory yet.

1818. 1824. *Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

THE ISLES OF GREECE

From *Don Juan*

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,—
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
  The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse:
  Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest." 12

The mountains look on Marathon—
  And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
  I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave. 18

A king sate on the rocky brow
  Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
  And men in nations;—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set, where were they? 24

And where are they? and where art thou,
  My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
  The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine? 30

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
  Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
  Even as I sing, suffuse my face;

For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come!"
'T is but the living who are dumb.

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine;
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen. 66

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind. 72

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own. 78

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells:
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad. 84

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,

My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

1821. *Lord Byron.*

A SMALL, SWEET IDYL

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,

Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

1847. *Lord Tennyson.*

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran,
Through caverns measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round;

And there were gardens, bright with sinuous
rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing
tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Infolding sunny spots of greenery.

But Oh! that deep romantic chasm which
slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil
seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were
breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift, half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail;
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles, meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale, the sacred river ran,—
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war.

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;

Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,—
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw;
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 't would win me
That, with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,—
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

1798. 1816. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

THE FORGING OF THE ANCHOR

Come, see the Dolphin's anchor forged; 't is at a white heat now:
The bellows ceased, the flames decreased; though on the forge's brow

The Forging of the Anchor

The little flames still fitfully play through the sable mound;
And fitfully you still may see the grim smiths ranking round,
All clad in leathern panoply, their broad hands only bare;
Some rest upon their sledges here, some work the windlass there.

The windlass strains the tackle-chains, the black mound heaves below,
And red and deep a hundred veins burst out at every throe;
It rises, roars, rends all outright—O Vulcan, what a glow!
'T is blinding white, 't is blasting bright, the high sun shines not so!
The high sun sees not, on the earth, such a fiery, fearful show,
The roof-ribs swarth, the candent hearth, the ruddy, lurid row
Of smiths that stand, an ardent band, like men before the foe;
As, quivering through his fleece of flame, the sailing monster, slow
Sinks on the anvil—all about the faces fiery grow—
"Hurrah!" they shout, "leap out, leap out;" bang, bang, the sledges go;
Hurrah! the jetted lightnings are hissing high and low;
A hailing fount of fire is struck at every squashing blow;

The leathern mail rebounds the hail; the rattling cinders strew
The ground around; at every bound the sweltering fountains flow;
And thick and loud the swinking crowd, at every stroke, pant "Ho!"

Leap out, leap out, my masters; leap out and lay on load!
Let 's forge a goodly anchor, a bower, thick and broad;
For a heart of oak is hanging on every blow, I bode,
And I see the good ship riding, all in a perilous road,—
The low reef roaring on her lee, the roll of ocean poured
From stem to stern, sea after sea; the mainmast by the board;
The bulwarks down, the rudder gone, the boats stove at the chains,—
But courage still, brave mariners, the bower still remains,
And not an inch to flinch he deigns save when ye pitch sky-high,
Then moves his head, as though he said, "Fear nothing,—here am I!"

Swing in your strokes in order, let foot and hand keep time;
Your blows make music sweeter far than any steeple's chime;

But while you sling your sledges, sing; and let
the burden be,
The Anchor is the Anvil-King, and royal crafts-
men we!
Strike in, strike in—the sparks begin to dull their
rustling red!
Our hammers ring with sharper din, our work
will soon be sped:
Our anchor soon must change his bed of fiery
rich array
For a hammock at the roaring bows, or an oozy
couch of clay;
Our anchor soon must change the lay of merry
craftsmen here,
For the Yeo-heave-o', and the Heave-away, and
the sighing seaman's cheer;
When, weighing slow, at eve they go—far, far
from love and home;
And sobbing sweethearts, in a row, wail o'er the
ocean foam.

In livid and obdurate gloom, he darkens down at
last:
A shapely one he is, and strong as e'er from cat
was cast.
O trusted and trustworthy guard, if thou hadst
life like me,
What pleasures would thy toils reward beneath
the deep green sea!
O deep Sea-diver, who might then behold such
sights as thou?
The hoary monsters' palaces! methinks what joy
't were now

To go plumb plunging down amid the assembly
of the whales,
And feel the churned sea round me boil beneath
their scourging tails!
Then deep in tangle-woods to fight the fierce sea
unicorn,
And send him foiled and bellowing back, for all
his ivory horn;
To leave the subtle sworder-fish of bony blade forlorn;
And for the ghastly-grinning shark, to laugh his
jaws to scorn;
To leap down on the kraken's back, where 'mid
Norwegian isles
He lies, a lubber anchorage for sudden shallowed
miles,
Till snorting, like an under-sea volcano, off he
rolls;
Meanwhile to swing, a-buffeting the far-astonished shoals
Of his black-browsing ocean-calves; or, haply in
a cove,
Shell-strewn, and consecrate of old to some Undinè's love,
To find the long-haired mermaidens; or, hard by
icy lands,
To wrestle with the Sea-serpent upon cerulean
sands.

O broad-armed Fisher of the Deep, whose sports
can equal thine?

The Dolphin weighs a thousand tons that tugs
thy cable line;
And night by night 't is thy delight, thy glory
day by day,
Through sable sea and breaker white, the giant
game to play;
But, shamer of our little sports! forgive the name
I gave,—
A fisher's joy is to destroy, thine office is to save.

O lodger in the sea-king's halls, couldst thou but
understand
Whose be the white bones by thy side, or who
that dripping band,
Slow swaying in the heaving waves that round
about thee bend,
With sounds like breakers in a dream, blessing
their ancient friend:
O, couldst thou know what heroes glide with
larger steps round thee,
Thine iron side would swell with pride; thou 'dst
leap within the sea!

Give honour to their memories who left the pleas-
ant strand,
To shed their blood so freely for the love of
Fatherland,—
Who left their chance of quiet age and grassy
churchyard grave,
So freely for a restless bed amid the tossing
wave;

Oh, though our Anchor may not be all I have
fondly sung,
Honour him for their memory, whose bones he
goes among!

1832. *Samuel Ferguson.*

SEAWEED

When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with seaweed from the rocks:

From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

From the tumbling surf, that buries
The Orkneyan skerries,
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate, rainy seas;—

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting

Seaweed

Currents of the restless main;
Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again.

So when storms of wild emotion
Strike the ocean
Of the poet's soul, erelong
From each cave and rocky fastness,
In its vastness,
Floats some fragment of a song:

From the far-off isles enchanted,
Heaven has planted
With the golden fruit of Truth;
From the flashing surf, whose vision
Gleams Elysian
In the tropic clime of Youth;

From the strong Will, and the Endeavor
That forever
Wrestles with the tides of Fate;
From the wreck of Hopes far-scattered,
Tempest-shattered,
Floating waste and desolate;—

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless heart;
Till at length in books recorded,
They, like hoarded
Household words, no more depart.

1844. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under;
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 't is my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning, my pilot, sits:
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder;
It struggles and howls by fits;

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;

The Cloud

Over the rills and the crags and the hills,
Over the lakes and plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As, on the jag of a mountain crag
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;

And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of the earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when, with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,—

The Snow-Storm

I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I rise and unbuild it again.

1820. *Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

THE SNOW-STORM

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.
Come, see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, naught cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs, and at the gate

A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

1841. *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

EARLY SPRING

Once more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throstles too.

Opens a door in Heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;

Early Spring

The stars are from their hands
  Flung thro' the woods,

The woods with living airs
  How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
  All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
  Heard by the land.

O follow, leaping blood,
  The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
  Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
  Like snowdrops, pure!

Past, Future glimpse and fade
  Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
  Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
  In sound and smell!

Till at thy chuckled note,
  Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
  And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
  From word to word.

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

1883. *Lord Tennyson.*

RAIN IN SUMMER

How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!

How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!

Across the window-pane
It pours and pours;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain!

The sick man from his chamber looks
At the twisted brooks;

He can feel the cool
Breath of each little pool;
His fevered brain
Grows calm again,
And he breathes a blessing on the rain.

From the neighboring school
Come the boys,
With more than their wonted noise
And commotion;
And down the wet streets
Sail their mimic fleets,
Till the treacherous pool
Ingulfs them in its whirling
And turbulent ocean.

In the country, on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,
Stretches the plain,
To the dry grass and the drier grain
How welcome is the rain!

In the furrowed land
The toilsome and patient oxen stand;
Lifting the yoke encumbered head,
With their dilated nostrils spread,
They silently inhale
The clover-scented gale,
And the vapors that arise
From the well-watered and smoking soil.
For this rest in the furrow after toil
Their large and lustrous eyes

Seem to thank the Lord,
More than man's spoken word.

Near at hand,
From under the sheltering trees,
The farmer sees
His pastures, and his fields of grain,
As they bend their tops
To the numberless beating drops
Of the incessant rain.
He counts it as no sin
That he sees therein
Only his own thrift and gain.

These, and far more than these,
The Poet sees!
He can behold
Aquarius old
Walking the fenceless fields of air;
And from each ample fold
Of the clouds about him rolled
Scattering everywhere
The showery rain,
As the farmer scatters his grain.

He can behold
Things manifold
That have not yet been wholly told,—
Have not been wholly sung nor said.
For his thought, that never stops,
Follows the water-drops
Down to the graves of the dead,

Song of the Brook

Down through chasms and gulfs profound,
To the dreary fountain-head
Of lakes and rivers under ground;
And sees them, when the rain is done,
On the bridge of colors seven
Climbing up once more to heaven,
Opposite the setting sun.

Thus the Seer,
With vision clear,
Sees forms appear and disappear,
In the perpetual round of strange,
Mysterious change
From birth to death, from death to birth,
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth;
Till glimpses more sublime
Of things, unseen before,
Unto his wondering eyes reveal
The Universe, as an immeasurable wheel
Turning forevermore
In the rapid and rushing river of Time.

1845. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

SONG OF THE BROOK

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel

Song of the Brook

With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river;
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

1855. *Lord Tennyson.*

I

FEBRUARY

Noon—and the north-west sweeps the empty road,
The rain-washed fields from hedge to hedge are bare;
Beneath the leafless elms some hind's abode
Looks small and void, and no smoke meets the air
From its poor hearth: one lonely rook doth dare
The gale, and beats above the unseen corn,
Then turns, and whirling down the wind is borne. 7

Shall it not hap that on some dawn of May
Thou shalt awake, and, thinking of days dead,
See nothing clear but this same dreary day,
Of all the days that have passed o'er thine head?
Shalt thou not wonder, looking from thy bed,
Through green leaves on the windless east a-fire,
That this day too thine heart doth still desire? 14

Shalt thou not wonder that it liveth yet,
The useless hope, the useless craving pain,

That made thy face, that lonely noontide wet
With more than beating of the chilly rain?
Shalt thou not hope for joy new born again,
Since no grief ever born can ever die
Through changeless change of seasons passing by? 21

2

MARCH

Slayer of the winter, art thou here again?
O welcome, thou that bring'st the summer nigh!
The bitter wind makes not thy victory vain,
Now will we mock thee for thy faint blue sky.
Welcome, O March! whose kindly days and dry
Make April ready for the throstle's song,
Thou first redresser of the winter's wrong! 7

Yea, welcome, March! and though I die ere June,
Yet for the hope of life I give thee praise,
Striving to swell the burden of the tune
That even now I hear thy brown birds raise,
Unmindful of the past or coming days;
Who sing: "O joy! a new year is begun:
What happiness to look upon the sun!" 14

Ah, what begetteth all this storm of bliss
But Death himself, who, crying solemnly,
E'en from the heart of sweet Forgetfulness,
Bids us "Rejoice! lest pleasureless ye die.
Within a little time must ye go by.
Stretch forth your open hands, and, while ye live,
Take all the gifts that Death and Life may give"? 21

3

MAY

O LOVE, this morn when the sweet nightingale
Had so long finished all he had to say,
That thou hadst slept, and sleep had told his tale;
And midst a peaceful dream had stolen away
In fragrant dawning of the first of May,
Didst thou see aught? didst thou hear voices sing
Ere to the risen sun the bells 'gan ring? 7

For then methought the Lord of Love went by
To take possession of his flowery throne,
Ringed round with maids, and youths, and minstrelsy;
A little while I sighed to find him gone,
A little while the dawning was alone,
And the light gathered; then I held my breath,
And shuddered at the sight of Eld and Death. 14

Alas! Love passed me in the twilight dun,
His music hushed the wakening ousel's song;
But on these twain shone out the golden sun,
And o'er their heads the brown bird's tune was strong,
As shivering, twixt the trees they stole along;
None noted aught their noiseless passing by,
The world had quite forgotten it must die. 21

4

OCTOBER

O LOVE, turn from the unchanging sea, and gaze
Down these grey slopes upon the year grown old,
A-dying mid the autumn-scented haze,
That hangeth o'er the hollow in the wold,
Where the wind-bitten ancient elms infold
Grey church, long barn, orchard, and red-roofed stead,
Wrought in dead days for men a long while dead. 7

Come down, O love; may not our hands still meet.
Since still we live to-day, forgetting June,
Forgetting May, deeming October sweet—
—O hearken, hearken! through the afternoon,

The grey tower sings a strange old tinkling tune!
Sweet, sweet, and sad, the toiling year's last breath,
Too satiate of life to strive with death.

And we too—will it not be soft and kind,
That rest from life, from patience and from pain,
That rest from bliss we know not when we find,
That rest from Love which ne'er the end can gain?—
—Hark, how the tune swells, that erewhile did wane!
Look up, love!—ah, cling close and never move!
How can I have enough of life and love?

1868-70. *William Morris.*

THE GREEN LINNET

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

The Green Linnet

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
    In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
    And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
    Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
    Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
    Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
    That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
    Pours forth his song in gushes;

As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

1803. 1807. *William Wordsworth.*

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their
streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt un-
sealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,

To a Mountain Daisy

Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the
old no more. 21

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by
thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice
that sings:— 28

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting
sea! 35

1858. *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flower,
Thou 's met me in an evil hour;

For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it 's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' spreckled breast!
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

To a Mountain Daisy

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betrayed,
And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On Life's rough ocean luckless starred!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering Worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink;
Till, wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruined, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

1786. *Robert Burns.*

THE SMALL CELANDINE

There is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 't is out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold:
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

"The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;

Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue."
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a Prodigal's Favourite—then, worse truth,
A Miser's Pensioner—behold our lot!
O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

1804. 1807. *William Wordsworth.*

THE WILD HONEYSUCKLE

Fair Flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet:
No roving foot shall crush thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
And sent soft waters murmuring by;
Thus quietly thy summer goes,
Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,
I grieve to see your future doom;
They died,—nor were those flowers more gay,
The flowers that did in Eden bloom;

Unpitying frosts, and Autumn's power
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews
At first thy little being came:
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
For when you die you are the same;
The space between, is but an hour,
The frail duration of a flower.

1786. *Philip Freneau.*

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged Year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

1832 *William Cullen Bryant.*

THE RHODORA

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there
brought you.

1839. *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

TO THE DANDELION

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
'T is the Spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee

To the Dandelion

Feels a more Summer-like warm ravishment
  In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows in the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
  Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
  That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth
    move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with
    thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
  Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
  With news from Heaven, which he could bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears
When birds and flowers and I were happy
    peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
  Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,

Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret
show,
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

1845. *James Russell Lowell.*

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of
the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and
meadows brown and sear.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn
leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rab-
bit's tread;
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the
shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through
all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers,
that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous
sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race
of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and
good of ours.

The Death of the Flowers

The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold
November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely
ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished
long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the
summer glow;
But on the hills the golden-rod, and the aster in
the wood,
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook in au-
tumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as
falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from
upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm mild day, as
still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their
winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard,
though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of
the rill,
The south-wind searches for the flowers whose
fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the
stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful
beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded
by my side.
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the
forests cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a
life so brief:
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young
friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with
the flowers.

1825. *William Cullen Bryant.*

OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical
shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond,
where the child leaving his bed wandered
alone, bareheaded, barefoot,
Down from the showered halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and
twisting as if they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted
to me,

From your memories, sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears,
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,
From the myriad thence-roused words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.
Once Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air, and the Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feathered guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,

And every day the she-bird crouched on her nest,
silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close,
never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

"Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great Sun!
While we bask, we two together.

"Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together."

Till of a sudden,
Maybe killed, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouched not on the
nest,
Nor returned that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appeared again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound
of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer
weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,

I saw. I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

"Blow! blow! blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait, till you blow my mate to me."

Yes, when the stars glistened,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scalloped stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.

He called on his mate,
He poured forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes, my brother, I know,—
The rest might not, but I have treasured every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listened long and long.

Listened to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you, my brother.

"Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.

"Low hangs the moon; it rose late,
It is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

"O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
With love, with love.

"O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

"Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves;
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

"Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

"Land! land! O land!
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again if you only would,
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

"O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

"O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth;
Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

"Shake out, carols!
Solitary here—the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! Death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless despairing carols!

"But soft! sink low;
Soft! let me just murmur;
And do you wait a moment, you husky-noised sea;
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint—I must be still, to listen;
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.

"Hither, my love!
Here I am! Here!
With this just-sustained note I announced myself to you;
This gentle call is for you, my love, for you.

"Do not be decoyed elsewhere!
That is the whistle of the wind—it is not my voice;
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray;
Those are the shadows of the leaves.

"O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.

"O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubles reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

"O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more."

The aria sinking,
All else continuing, the stars shining,
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing.

With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of the sea almost touching,
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,
The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,
The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,
The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul)
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,
And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer, louder, and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me, never to die.

O you singers solitary, singing by yourself,
projecting me,
O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease
perpetuating you,
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent
from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I
was before what there in the night,
By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there aroused, the fire, the sweet
hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here
somewhere)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it)
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time,
you sea-waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whispered me through the night, and very
plainly before daybreak,
Lisped to me the low and delicious word death,
And again death, death, death, death,

Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like
my aroused child's heart,
But edging near as privately for me, rustling at
my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving
me softly all over,
Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and
brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on
Paumanok's gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs at random,
My own songs awaked from that hour,
And with them the key, the word up from the
waves,
The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping
to my feet,
(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle,
swathed in sweet garments, bending aside)
The sea whispered me.

1871. *Walt Whitman.*

PORTRAITS OF PEOPLE

THE MEN OF OLD

I KNOW not that the men of old
  Were better than men now,
Of heart more kind, of hand more bold,
  Of more ingenuous brow:
I heed not those who pine for force
  A ghost of Time to raise,
As if they thus could check the course
  Of these appointed days.

Still it is true, and over-true,
  That I delight to close
This book of life self-wise and new,
  And let my thoughts repose
On all that humble happiness,
  The world has since foregone,—
The daylight of contentedness
  That on those faces shone!

With rights, though not too closely scanned,
  Enjoyed, as far as known,—
With will by no reverse unmanned,—
  With pulse of even tone,—
They from to-day and from to-night
  Expected nothing more,

Than yesterday and yesternight
Had proffered them before.

To them was life a simple art
Of duties to be done,
A game where each man took his part,
A race where all must run;
A battle whose great scheme and scope
They little cared to know,
Content, as men at arms, to cope
Each with his fronting foe.

Man *now* his Virtue's diadem
Puts on and proudly wears,
Great thoughts, great feelings, came to them,
Like instincts, unawares:
Blending their souls' sublimest needs
With tasks of every day,
They went about their gravest deeds,
As noble boys at play.—

And what if Nature's fearful wound
They did not probe and bare,
For that their spirits never swooned
To watch the misery there,—
For that their love but flowed more fast,
Their charities more free,
Not conscious what mere drops they cast
Into the evil sea.

A man's best things are nearest him,
Lie close about his feet;

It is the distant and the dim
That we are sick to greet;
For flowers that grow our hands beneath
We struggle and aspire,—
Our hearts must die, except they breathe
The air of fresh Desire.

Yet, Brothers, who up Reason's hill
Advance with hopeful cheer,—
Oh! loiter not, those heights are chill,
As chill as they are clear;
And still restrain your haughty gaze,
The loftier that ye go,
Remembering distance leaves a haze
On all that lies below.

1838. *Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton.*

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd; and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West; thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave

Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did
make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no
more;"
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer
roam."

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the
blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers
weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs
in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from
weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil
alone?
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown
of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,

Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold,
Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,

And we should come like ghosts to trouble
joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten
things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile;
'T is hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore tasks to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the
pilot-stars.

VII

But propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet—while warm airs lull us, blowing
lowly—
With half-dropped eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing
slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined
vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling

Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone;
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotus-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;

Where they smile in secret, looking over
wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in
a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale
of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words
are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that
cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with
enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine
and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 't is
whisper'd—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian
valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of
asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than
toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not
wander more.

1833. *Lord Tennyson.*

THE SOWER

I saw a Sower walking slow
Across the earth, from east to west;
His hair was white as mountain snow,
His head drooped forward on his breast.

With shrivelled hands he flung his seed,
Nor ever turned to look behind;
Of sight or sound he took no heed;
It seemed he was both deaf and blind.

His dim face showed no soul beneath,
Yet in my heart I felt a stir,
As if I looked upon the sheath,
That once had held Excalibur.

I heard, as still the seed he cast,
How, crooning to himself, he sung,
"I sow again the holy Past,
The happy days when I was young.

"Then all was wheat without a tare,
Then all was righteous, fair, and true;
And I am he whose thoughtful care
Shall plant the Old World in the New.

The Sower

"The fruitful germs I scatter free,
With busy hand, while all men sleep;
In Europe now, from sea to sea,
The nations bless me as they reap."

Then I looked back along his path,
And heard the clash of steel on steel,
Where man faced man, in deadly wrath,
While clanged the tocsin's hurrying peal.

The sky with burning towns flared red,
Nearer the noise of fighting rolled,
And brother's blood, by brothers shed,
Crept curdling over pavements cold.

Then marked I how each germ of truth
Which through the dotard's fingers ran
Was mated with a dragon's tooth
Whence there sprang up an armèd man.

I shouted, but he could not hear;
Made signs, but these he could not see;
And still, without a doubt or fear,
Broadcast he scattered anarchy.

Long to my straining ears the blast
Brought faintly back the words he sung:
"I sow again the holy Past,
The happy days when I was young."

1848. *James Russell Lowell.*

ROBIN HOOD

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amaz'd to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;

But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale,
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grenè shawe;"
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his turfèd grave
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing
Honour to the old bow-string!
Honour to the bugle-horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!

Honour to the Lincoln green!
Honour to the archer keen!
Honour to tight Little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honour to Maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood-clan!
Though their days have hurried by,
Let us two a burden try.

1818. 1820. *John Keats.*

TO WORDSWORTH

Those who have laid the harp aside
And turn'd to idler things,
From very restlessness have tried
The loose and dusty strings,
And, catching back some favourite strain,
Run with it o'er the chords again.

But Memory is not a Muse,
O Wordsworth! though 't is said
They all descend from her, and use
To haunt her fountain-head:
That other men should work for me
In the rich mines of Poesie,

Pleases me better than the toil
Of smoothing under hardened hand,

To Wordsworth

With attic emery and oil,
  The shining point for Wisdom's wand,
Like those thou temperest 'mid the rills
Descending from thy native hills.
Without his governance, in vain
  Manhood is strong, and Youth is bold.

If oftentimes the o'er-piled strain
  Clogs in the furnace, and grows cold
Beneath his pinions deep and frore,
And swells and melts and flows no more,
That is because the heat beneath
  Pants in its cavern poorly fed.
Life springs not from the couch of Death,
  Nor Muse nor Grace can raise the dead;
Unturn'd then let the mass remain,
Intractable to sun or rain.

A marsh, where only flat leaves lie,
And showing but the broken sky,
Too surely is the sweetest lay
That wins the ear and wastes the day,
Where youthful Fancy pouts alone
And lets not Wisdom touch her zone.

He who would build his fame up high,
The rule and plummet must apply,
Nor say, "I 'll do what I have plann'd,"
Before he try if loam or sand
Be still remaining in the place
Delved for each polished pillar's base.
With skilful eye and fit device

Thou raisest every edifice,
Whether in sheltered vale it stand,
Or overlook the Dardan strand,
Amid the cypresses that mourn
Laodameia's love forlorn.

We both have run o'er half the space
Listed for mortal's earthly race;
We both have crossed life's fervid line,
And other stars before us shine:
May they be bright and prosperous
As those that have been stars for us!
Our course by Milton's light was sped,
And Shakespeare shining overhead:
Chatting on deck was Dryden too,
The Bacon of the rhyming crew;
None ever cross'd our mystic sea
More richly stored with thought than he;
Tho' never tender nor sublime,
He wrestles with and conquers Time.
To learn my lore on Chaucer's knee,
I left much prouder company;
Thee gentle Spenser fondly led,
But me he mostly sent to bed.

I wish them every joy above
That highly blessed spirits prove,
Save one: and that too shall be theirs,
But after many rolling years,
When 'mid their light thy light appears.

1833. 1837. *Walter Savage Landor.*

MEMORABILIA

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that,
And also you were living after;
And the memory I started at—
My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

For there I picked up on the heather
And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle-feather!
Well, I forget the rest.

1855. *Robert Browning.*

TO ROBERT BROWNING

There is delight in singing, tho' none hear
Beside the singer; and there is delight
In praising, tho' the praiser sit alone
And see the prais'd far off him, far above.

Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walked along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

1846. *Walter Savage Landor.*

ON A BUST OF DANTE

See, from this counterfeit of him
Whom Arno shall remember long,
How stern of lineament, how grim,
The father was of Tuscan song:
There but the burning sense of wrong,
Perpetual care and scorn, abide;
Small friendship for the lordly throng;
Distrust of all the world beside.

Faithful if this wan image be,
No dream his life was,—but a fight!
Could any Beatrice see
A lover in that anchorite?
To that cold Ghibelline's gloomy sight

On a Bust of Dante

Who could have guessed the visions
came
Of Beauty, veiled with heavenly light,
In circles of eternal flame?

The lips as Cumæ's cavern close,
The cheeks with fast and sorrow thin,
The rigid front, almost morose,
But for the patient hope within,
Declare a life whose course hath been
Unsullied still, though still severe,
Which, through the wavering days of sin,
Kept itself icy-chaste and clear.

Not wholly such his haggard look
When wandering once, forlorn, he strayed,
With no companions save his book,
To Corvo's hushed monastic shade;
Where, as the Benedictine laid
His palm upon the convent's guest,
The single boon for which he prayed
Was peace, that pilgrim's one request.

Peace dwells not here,—this rugged face
Betrays no spirit of repose;
The sullen warrior sole we trace,
The marble man of many woes.
Such was his mien when first arose
The thought of that strange tale divine
When hell he peopled with his foes,
Dread scourge of many a guilty line.

War to the last he waged with all
The tyrant canker-worms of earth;
Baron and duke, in hold and hall,
Cursed the dark hour that gave him birth;
He used Rome's harlot for his mirth;
Plucked bare hypocrisy and crime;
But valiant souls of knightly worth
Transmitted to the rolls of Time. 48

O Time! whose verdicts mock our own,
The only righteous judge art thou;
That poor old exile, sad and lone,
Is Latium's other Virgil now:
Before his name the nations bow;
His words are parcel of mankind,
Deep in whose hearts, as on his brow,
The marks have sunk of Dante's mind. 56

1841. *Thomas William Parsons.*

ICHABOD

DANIEL WEBSTER, 1850

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore! 4

Revile him not, the Tempter hath
A snare for all;

Ichabod

And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall!

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains;
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!

1850. *John Greenleaf Whittier.*

THERE WAS A BOY

There was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of jocund din! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind

Ruth

With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.
  This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Preëminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And through that church-yard when my way has led
On summer-evenings, I believe, that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!

1800. *William Wordsworth*

RUTH

She stood breast high amid the corn
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripen'd;—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veil'd a light,
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim;—
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks:—

Sure, I said, Heav'n did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean,
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.

1827. *Thomas Hood.*

STEPPING WESTWARD

"What, you are stepping westward?"
—"Yea."
—'T would be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny:
I liked the greeting; 't was a sound
Of something without place or bound;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

"She was a Phantom of Delight"

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake:
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of traveling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

1803. 1807. *William Wordsworth.*

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT"

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;

A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and
smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

1804 1807. *William Wordsworth.*

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

The Solitary Reaper

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

1803. 1807. *William Wordsworth.*

MARIANA

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Mariana

Upon the middle of the night,
  Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
  From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
  In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
  Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
    She only said, "The day is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;
    She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
  A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
  The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
  All silver-green with gnarlèd bark:
  For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
    She only said, "My life is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;
    She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
  And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
  She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,

And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices call'd her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!"

1830. *Tennyson.*

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,

And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from the threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought!

1840. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

THE LAST LEAF

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,

And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—
Poor old lady; she is dead
Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

1836. *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

THE BAREFOOT BOY

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy!
Prince thou art,—the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye,—
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

Oh, for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild-flower's time and place,

Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground-nut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of gray hornet artisans!
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy,—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh, for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;

Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too;
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh, for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread;
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerly, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!

Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

1855. *John Greenleaf Whittier.*

POEMS IN CHARACTER

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known: cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!

As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
  This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
  There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
    with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;

Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

1842. *Lord Tennyson.*

ABT VOGLER

(After he has been extemporizing upon the musical instrument of his invention)

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,

Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of aim,
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed,—
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned to raise!
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise!
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace well,
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

And another would mount and march, like the excellent minion he was,
Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,

Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest:
For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,
When a great illumination surprises a festal night—
Outlined round and round Rome's dome from space to spire)
Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain to match man's birth,
Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky:
Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with mine,
Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering star;
Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near nor far.

Nay more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Protoplast,

Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier
wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to
their liking at last;
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed
through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe in an old
world worth their new:
What never had been, was now; what was, as it
shall be anon;
And what is,—shall I say, matched both? for I
was made perfect too.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to
a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish
flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think, had I
painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process
so wonder-worth:
Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect
proceeds from cause,
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how
the tale is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to
laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list
enrolled:—

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will
that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and,
lo, they are!

And I know not if, save in this, such gift be
allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth
sound, but a star.
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself
is naught:
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and
all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my
thought:
And there! Ye have heard and seen: consider
and bow the head! 56

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I
reared;
Gone! and the good tears start, the praises that
come too slow;
For one is assured at first, one scarce can say
that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing
was to go.
Never to be again! But many more of the kind
As good, nay, better, perchance: is this your
comfort to me?
To me, who must be saved because I cling with
my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God:
ay, what was, shall be. 64

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffa-
ble Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made
with hands!

What, have fear of change from thee who art
ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy
power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What was,
shall live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying
sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so
much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a
perfect round. 72

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good
shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor
good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives
for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for
earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself
in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the
bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear
it by and by. 80

And what is our failure here but a triumph's
evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered
or agonized?

Abt Vogler

Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of weal and woe:
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 't is we musicians know. 88

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her reign:
I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
Sliding by semitones till I sink to the minor,—yes,
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found.
The C Major of this life: so, now I will try to sleep. 96

1864. *Robert Browning.*

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
  My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
  Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
  The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
  The horse and rider reel;
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
  And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
  That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
  On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end,
  To save from shame and thrall;
But all my heart is drawn above,
  My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
  Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
  Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
  A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the Holy Grail.

1834. 1842. *Lord Tennyson.*

TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I WONDER do you feel to-day
  As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
  In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
  Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
  Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

Help me to hold it! First it left
  The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
  Some old tomb's ruin; yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

Where one small orange cup amassed
  Five beetles—blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal: and last,
  Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

The champaign with its endless fleece
  Of feathery grasses everywhere!

Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting nature have her way
While heaven looks from its towers!

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

I would that you were all to me,
You that are just so much, no more.
Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be?

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs,—your part my part
In life, for good and ill.

No, I yearn upward, touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

A Woman's Last Word

Already how am I so far
  Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
  Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

Just when I seemed about to learn!
  Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
  Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

1855. *Robert Browning.*

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

Let 's contend no more, Love,
  Strive nor weep:
All be as before, Love,
  —Only sleep!

What so wild as words are?
  I and thou
In debate, as birds are,
  Hawk on bough!

See the creature stalking
  While we speak!
Hush and hide the talking,
  Cheek on cheek!

What so false as truth is,
  False to thee?
Where the serpent's tooth is
  Shun the tree—

Where the apple reddens
  Never pry—
Lest we lose our Edens,
  Eve and I.

Be a god and hold me
  With a charm!
Be a man and fold me
  With thine arm!

Teach me, only teach, Love!
  As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
  Think thy thought—

Meet, if thou require it,
  Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
  In thy hands.

That shall be to-morrow,
  Not to-night;
I must bury sorrow
  Out of sight:

—Must a little weep, Love,
(Foolish me!)
And so fall asleep, Love,
Loved by thee.

1855. *Robert Browning.*

RABBI BEN EZRA

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor
be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends,
transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a
spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find a feast;
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the
maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I
must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not
sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn"?

Not once beat "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what thou shalt do!"

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!" 72

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ. 78

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue. 84

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old. 90

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me; we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb,
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

1864. *Robert Browning.*

SAUL

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness: but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight

Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest
of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-
roof, showed Saul.

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms
stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the centre, that
goes to each side;
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as,
caught in his pangs
And waiting his change, the king-serpent all
heavily hangs,
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliver-
ance come
With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul, drear
and stark, blind and dumb.

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we
twine round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide
—those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know,
as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding
be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo,
they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within
the stream's bed;

And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!

—Then the tune for which quails on the corn-land will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another; and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.—And then, the last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey—"Bear, bear him along,
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! Are balm seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.

Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"—
And then the glad chaunt
Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens,
next, she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.—And
then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and
buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our
friends? Then, the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory en-
throned.
But I stopped here: for here in the darkness
Saul groaned.

And I paused, held my breath in such silence,
and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered:
and sparkles 'gan dart
From the jewels that woke in his turban, at
once, with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies cour-
ageous at heart.
So the head: but the body still moved not, still
hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued
it unchecked,
As I sang:—

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit
feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew
unbraced.

Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fire-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime and all was for best?'

Then they sung through their tears in strong
triumph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the
working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles,
the spirit strained true:
And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood
of wonder and hope,
Present promise and wealth of the future
beyond the eye's scope,—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people
is thine;
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on
one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love
and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and
lets the gold go),
High ambition and deeds which surpass it,
fame crowning them,—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—
King Saul!"

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart,
hand, harp and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each
bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as
when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains
through its array,

And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—"Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone
A year's snow bound about for a breast-plate,—leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet.
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathing of ages untold—
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—all hail, there they are!
—Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled

At the King's self left standing before me,
released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to
traverse 'twixt hope and despair,
Death was past, life not come: so he waited.
Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant
forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter:
't was Saul as before.
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor
was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye
watch from the shore,
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's
slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'er-
lap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intensely:
so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

What spell or what charm,
(For awhile there was trouble within me,) what
next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him?—
Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all
that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty:
beyond, on what fields,

Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to
brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them
the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good"; still he drinks not: he
lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when
round me the sheep
Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled
slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world
that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt
the hill and the sky:
And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained
to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the
plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and
image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I
hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses,
the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what men strive
for." And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer;
so, once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as
thus—

"Yea, my King,"
I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere
comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by
man and by brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in
our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,—
how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler;
then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest
when these too, in turn,
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed per-
fect: yet more was to learn,
E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit.
Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow?
or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced
them? Not so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while
the palm-wine shall stanch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour
thee such wine,
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the
spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee,
thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when inconscious, the
life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running!
Each deed thou hast done

Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until
e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil
him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not,
must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each
ray of thy will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long
over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor,
till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons, who in turn fill the
South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of.
Carouse in the past!
But the license of age has its limit; thou diest
at last:
As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose
at her height,
So with man—so his power and his beauty
forever take flight.
No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine!
Look forth o'er the years!
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual;
begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make
his tomb—bid arise
A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square,
till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King slum-
bers: whose fame would ye know?

Up above see the rock's naked face, where the
record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such
was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the popu-
lace chid,—
For not half, they 'll affirm, is comprised there!
Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar,
whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 't is level before them) their
praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—the
stateman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment.
The river 's a-wave
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other
when prophet-winds rave:
So the pen gives unborn generations their due
and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank
God that thou art!"

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who
didst grant me that day,
And before it not seldom hast granted thy help
to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure,—my
shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy
word was my word,—

Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me—till, mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance—God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice to my heart
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep,
And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

I say then,—my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and ever more strong
Made a proffer of good to console him—he slowly resumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes

Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his
countenance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now
his loins as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the
clasp set before.
He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error
had bent
The broad brow from daily communion; and
still, though much spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the
same, God did choose,
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate,
never quite lose.
So sank he along by the tent-prop till, stayed
by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he
leaned there awhile,
And sat out my singing,—one arm round the
tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack—till
I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man
patient there;
And thus ended, the harp falling forward.
Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above
his vast knees
Which were thrust out on each side around me,
like oak roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked
up to know

If the best I could do had brought solace: he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: through my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power—
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine—
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?
I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
As this moment,—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more! outbroke—

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—returned him again

His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as
I saw:
I report, as a man may of God's work—all 's
love, yet all 's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me.
Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a
dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at
Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank
to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image suc-
cess?
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more
and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and
God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the
soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever
renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending
upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to
God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to
his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this
deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some
gift of my own.

There 's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance, (I laugh as I think)
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love: I abstain for love's sake.
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appall?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator,—the end, what Began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous dower

Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to
make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for
insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm
tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and
give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him,
maintain at the height
This perfection,—succeed with life's day-spring,
death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul the
mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and
bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to
find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a
new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who
knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the
rest to make sure;
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning in-
tensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by
the struggles in this.

"I believe it! 'T is thou, God, that givest, 't is
I who receive:

In the first is the last, in thy will is my power
to believe.
All 's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover,
as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these
arms to the air.
From thy will stream the worlds, life and
nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why
am I not loth
To look that, even that in the face too? Why
is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What
stops my despair?
This;—'t is not what man Does which exalts
him, but what man Would do!
See the King—I would help him but cannot,
the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow
poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—
knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak
through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst
thou—so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest,
uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave
up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by
no breath,

Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins
issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty
be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being
Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest
shall stand the most weak.
'T is the weakness in strength, that I cry for!
my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it
shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man
like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a
Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!
See the Christ stand!

I know not too well how I found my way home
in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to
left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the
alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as
strugglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for
news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened,
hell loosed with her crews;

And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with awe:
E'en the serpent that slid away silent,—he felt the new law.
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and moved the vine-bowers:

And the little brooks witnessing murmured,
persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—
"E'en so, it is so!"

1845. 1855. *Robert Browning.*

VERSES

Supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk during his solitary abode in the island of Juan Fernandez

I AM monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain,
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,

Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends,—do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair,
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There 's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

1782. *William Cowper.*

LOCKSLEY HALL

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet
't is early morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound
upon the bugle-horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of old, the
curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over
Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks
the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into
cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere
I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the
West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed;

When I dipped into the future far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,

And her eyes on all my motions with a mute
observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak
the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being
sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color
and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the
northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a
sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of
hazel eyes—

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they
should do me wrong";
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping,
"I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of time, and turn'd it
in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in
golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all
the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, past
in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear
the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the
fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch
the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching
of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy,
mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary, moorland! O the barren,
barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all
songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a
shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy? having known
me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower
heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level
day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to
sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated
with a clown,

And the grossness of his nature will have
weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have
spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer
than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they
are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his
hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is
overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him
with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to
understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew
thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the
heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the
strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the
living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest
Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd
forehead of the fool!

Well—'t is well that I should bluster!—
Hadst thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than
ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which
bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart
be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length
of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the
clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records
of the mind?
Can I part her from myself, and love her, as
I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd; sweetly did she
speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at
was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for
the love she bore?

No—she never loved me truly: love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender
voice will cry.
'T is a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy
trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival
brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from
the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dear-
ness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his; it will be worthy
of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty
part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down
a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—she
herself was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—Perish in thy
self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore
should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither
by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting
upon days like these?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but
to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the
markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which
I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the
foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the
winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt
that Honour feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at
each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that
earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou won-
drous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt
before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the
tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the
coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves
his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near
and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like
a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone
before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the
throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever
reaping something new;
That which they have done but earnest of the
things that they shall do.

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye
could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies
of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down
with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there
rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the
central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-
wind rushing warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging
thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the
battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of
the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a
fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in
universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro'
me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with
the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here
are out of joint:
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on
from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion,
creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a
slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing
purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the
process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of
his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever
like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I
linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is
more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he
bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the still-
ness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding
on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target
for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a
moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved
so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's
pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded
in a shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions,
match'd with mine,

Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water
unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing.
Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life
began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father
evil-starr'd;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish
uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander
far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of
the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons
and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster,
knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an
European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings
the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the
heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purpled
spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than
in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts
that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have
scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear
my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive,
and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their
lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the
rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miser-
able books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know*
my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the
Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our
glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast
with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were
sun or clime?

I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files
of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish
one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like
Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward,
forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the
ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into
the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of
Cathay.

Mother-Age,—for mine I knew not,—help me
as when life begun:
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the
lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath
not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my
fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to
Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for
me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening
over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast
a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail,
or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward,
and I go.

1842. *Lord Tennyson.*

ANTONY TO CLEOPATRA

I AM dying, Egypt, dying!
Ebbs the crimson life-tide fast,
And the dark Plutonian shadows
Gather on the evening blast;
Let thine arms, oh Queen, support me,
Hush thy sobs and bow thine ear,
Listen to the great heart secrets
Thou, and thou alone, must hear.

Though my scarred and veteran legions
Bear their eagles high no more,
And my wrecked and scattered galleys
Strew dark Actium's fatal shore:
Though no glittering guards surround me,
Prompt to do their master's will,
I must perish like a Roman—
Die the great Triumvir still.

Antony to Cleopatra

Let not Cæsar's servile minions
  Mock the lion thus laid low;
'T was no foeman's arm that felled him,
  'T was his own that struck the blow:
His who, pillowed on thy bosom,
  Turned aside from glory's ray—
His who, drunk with thy caresses,
  Madly threw a world away.

Should the base plebeian rabble
  Dare assail my name at Rome,
Where my noble spouse, Octavia,
  Weeps within her widowed home—
Seek her; say the gods bear witness—
  Altars, augurs, circling wings—
That her blood, with mine commingled,
  Yet shall mount the throne of kings.

As for thee, star-eyed Egyptian—
  Glorious sorceress of the Nile!
Light the path to Stygian darkness,
  With the splendor of thy smile;
Give the Cæsar crowns and arches,
  Let his brow the laurel twine;
I can scorn the Senate's triumphs,
  Triumphing in love like thine.

I am dying, Egypt, dying!
  Hark! the insulting foeman's cry;
They are coming—quick, my falchion!
  Let me front them ere I die.

Ah! no more amid the battle
Shall my heart exulting swell;
Isis and Osiris guard thee—
Cleopatra—Rome—farewell! 48

c. 1860. *William Haines Lytle.*

THE LAST BUCCANEER

Oh, England is a pleasant place for them that 's rich and high,
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I;
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall see again
As the pleasant Isle of Avès, beside the Spanish main. 4

There were forty craft in Avès that were both swift and stout,
All furnish'd well with small arms and cannons round about;
And a thousand men in Avès made laws to fair and free
To choose their valiant captains and obey them loyally. 8

Thence we sail'd against the Spaniard with his hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung by cruel tortures from the Indian folk of old;

Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as hard as stone,
Which flog men and keel-haul them, and starve them to the bone.

Oh, the palms grew high in Avès, and fruits that shone like gold,
And the colibris and parrots they were gorgeous to behold;
And the negro maids to Avès from bondage fast did flee,
To welcome gallant sailors a-sweeping in from sea.

Oh, sweet it was in Avès to hear the landward breeze,
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you, while you listen'd to the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never touched the shore.

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine things must be;
So the King's ships sail'd on Avès, and quite put down were we.
All day we fought like bulldogs, but they burst the booms at night;
And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from the fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass beside,
Till for all I tried to cheer her, the poor young thing she died;
But as I lay a-gasping, a Bristol sail came by,
And brought me home to England here, to beg until I die.

And now I 'm old and going—I 'm sure I can't tell where;
One comfort is, this world's so hard, I can't be worse off there:
If I might be a sea-dove, I 'd fly across the main,
To the pleasant Isle of Avès, to look at it once again.

1857. *Charles Kingsley.*

LIFE'S PHILOSOPHY

THE WORLD

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days,
years,
Driv'n by the spheres
Like a vast shadow mov'd; in which the world
And all her train were hurl'd.

The doting lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his slights,
Wit's sour delights;
With gloves, and knots the silly snares of
pleasure,
Yet his dear treasure,
All scatter'd lay, while he his eyes did pour
Upon a flower.

The darksome statesman, hung with weights
and woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog, moved there so slow,
He did nor stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts—like sad eclipses—scowl
Upon his soul,

And clouds of crying witnesses without
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digg'd the mole, and lest his ways be
found,
Work'd under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey; but one did see
That policy:
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
Were gnats and flies;
It rain'd about him blood and tears, but he
Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sate pining all his life there, did scarce trust
His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
In fear of thieves.
Thousands there were as frantic as himself,
And hugg'd each one his pelf;
The down-right epicure plac'd heav'n in sense,
And scorn'd pretence;
While others, slip'd into a wide excess,
Said little less;
The weaker sort slight, trivial wares enslave,
Who think them brave;
And poor, despisèd Truth sate counting by
Their victory.

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
And sing, and weep, soar'd up into the ring;
But most would use no wing.

A Psalm of Life

O fools—said I—thus to prefer dark night
Before true light!
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
Because it shows the way;
The way, which from this dead and dark abode
Leads up to God;
A way where you might tread the sun, and be
More bright than he!
But as I did their madness so discuss,
One whisper'd thus,
"This ring the Bride-groom did for none provide,
But for His Bride."

1650. *Henry Vaughan.*

A PSALM OF LIFE

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

1838. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

THE BELEAGUERED CITY

I HAVE read, in some old, marvellous tale,
Some legend strange and vague,
That a midnight host of spectres pale
Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream,
With the wan moon overhead,
There stood, as in an awful dream,
The army of the dead.

White as a sea-fog, landward bound,
The spectral camp was seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
The river flowed between.

No other voice nor sound was there,
No drum, nor sentry's pace;
The mist-like banners clasped the air,
As clouds with clouds embrace.

But when the old cathedral bell
Proclaimed the morning prayer,
The white pavilions rose and fell
On the alarmèd air.

Down the broad valley fast and far
The troubled army fled;
Up rose the glorious morning star,
The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of phantoms vast and wan
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,
In Fancy's misty light,
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam
Portentous through the night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground
The spectral camp is seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice nor sound is there,
In the army of the grave;
No other challenge breaks the air,
But the rushing of Life's wave.

And when the solemn and deep church-bell
Entreats the soul to pray,
The midnight phantoms feel the spell,
The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar
The spectral camp is fled;
Faith shineth as a morning star,
Our ghastly fears are dead.

1839. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made

A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired

Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star;
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

1799. 1809. *William Wordsworth.*

LINES

Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.
————Who he was
That piled these stones and with the mossy sod

First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favoured Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper:
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 't is
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor, that
time,
When nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds,
Warm from the labours of benevolence,

The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost Man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died,—this seat his only monument.
If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's words, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

1795. 1798. *William Wordsworth.*

HOME

What is House and what is Home,
Where with freedom thou hast room,
And may'st to all tyrants say,
This you cannot take away?
'T is no thing with doors and walls,
Which at every earthquake falls;
No fair towers, whose princely fashion
Is but Plunder's invitation;
No stout marble structure, where
Walls Eternity do dare;
No brass gates, no bars of steel,
Tho' Time's teeth they scorn to feel:
Brass is not so bold as Pride,
If on Power's wings it ride;
Marble 's not so hard as Spite
Arm'd with lawless Strength and Might.
Right and just Possession, be
Potent names, when Laws stand free:
But if once that rampart fall,
Stoutest thieves inherit all:
To be rich and weak 's a sure
And sufficient forfeiture.

Seek no more abroad, say I,
House and Home, but turn thine eye

Inward, and observe thy breast;
There alone dwells solid Rest.
That 's a close immured tower
Which can mock all hostile power.
To thyself a tenant be,
And inhabit safe and free.
Say not that this House is small,
Girt up in a narrow wall:
In a cleanly sober mind
Heaven itself full room doth find.
Th' Infinite Creator can
Dwell in it; and may not Man?
Here content make thy abode
With thyself and with thy God.
Here in this sweet privacy
May'st thou with thyself agree,
And keep House in peace, tho' all
Th' Universe's fabric fall.
No disaster can distress thee,
Nor no Fury dispossess thee:
Let all war and plunder come,
Still may'st thou dwell safe at Home.

Home is everywhere to thee,
Who canst thine own dwelling be;
Yea, tho' ruthless Death assail thee,
Still thy lodging will not fail thee:
Still thy Soul's thine own; and she
To an House removed shall be;
An eternal House above,
Wall'd, and roof'd, and paved with
Love.

There shall these mud-walls of thine,
Gallantly repair'd, out-shine
Mortal Stars;—No Star shall be
In that Heaven but such as Thee.

c. 1650-60. 1749. *Joseph Beaumont.*

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill;

Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumours freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;

And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend.

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall:
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And, having nothing, yet hath all.

c. 1614. *Sir Henry Wotton.*

WILL

O, WELL for him whose will is strong!
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong:
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault.
Recurring and suggesting still!
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,

And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

1855. *Lord Tennyson.*

LIFE

LIFE! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met
I own to me 's a secret yet.
But this I know, when thou art fled,
Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,
No clod so valueless shall be, as all that then
remains of me.
O whither, whither dost thou fly,
Where bend unseen thy trackless course,
And in this strange divorce,
Ah, tell where I must seek this compound I?

To the vast ocean of empyreal flame,
From whence thy essence came,
Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed
From matter's base encumbering weed?
Or dost thou, hid from sight,
Wait, like some spell-bound knight,
Through blank, oblivious years the appointed
hours
To break thy trance and reassume thy power?
Yet canst thou, without thought or feeling be?
O say what art thou, when no more thou 'rt thee?

"My Days among the Dead are Past"

Life! we 've been long together
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'T is hard to part when friends are dear,—
Perhaps 't will cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good Night,—but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good Morning.

c. 1825. *Anna Letitia Barbauld.*

"MY DAYS AMONG THE DEAD ARE PAST"

My days among the Dead are past;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old;
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe;
And, while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears,

And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

1818. *Robert Southey.*

EACH AND ALL

Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown,
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky;—
He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.
The delicate shells lay on the shore;

The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore,
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.
The lover watched his graceful maid,
As mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best-attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;—
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.
Then I said, "I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth:"—
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird;—
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

1847. *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

YOUTH AND AGE

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young!
When I was young?—Ah, woeful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
How lightly *then* it flashed along:—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide!
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in 't together.
Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!
Ere I was old? Ah, woeful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth 's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet,

'T is known, that Thou and I were one,
I 'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be that Thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd:—
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To *make believe,* that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.
Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve!
Where no hope is, life 's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
  When we are old:
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismist;
Yet hath out-stay'd his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

1823. 1828. 1832. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

THE FORERUNNERS

Long I followed happy guides,
I could never reach their sides;
Their step is forth, and, ere the day,
Breaks up their leaguer, and away.

Keen my sense, my heart was young,
Right good-will my sinews strung,
But no speed of mine avails
To hunt upon their shining trails.
On and away, their hasting feet
Make the morning proud and sweet;
Flowers they strew,—I catch the scent;
Or tone of silver instrument
Leaves on the wind melodious trace;
Yet I could never see their face.
On eastern hills I see their smokes,
Mixed with mist by distant lochs.
I met many travellers
Who the road had surely kept;
They saw not my fine revellers,—
These had crossed them while they slept.
Some had heard their fair report,
In the country or the court.
Fleetest couriers alive
Never yet could once arrive,
As they went or they returned,
At the house where these sojourned.
Sometimes their strong speed they slacken,
Though they are not overtaken;
In sleep their jubilant troop is near,—
I tuneful voices overhear;
It may be in wood or waste,—
At unawares 't is come and passed.
Their near camp my spirit knows
By signs gracious as rainbows.
I thenceforward and long after,
Listen for their harp-like laughter,

And carry in my heart, for days,
Peace that hallows rudest ways.

1847. *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

TERMINUS

It is time to be old,
To take in sail:—
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said: "No more!
No farther shoot
Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root.
Fancy departs: no more invent;
Contract thy firmament
To compass of a tent.
There 's not enough for this and that,
Make thy option which of two;
Economize the failing river,
Not the less revere the Giver,
Leave the many and hold the few.
Timely wise accept the terms,
Soften the fall with wary foot;
A little while
Still plan and smile,
And,—fault of novel germs,—
Mature the unfallen fruit.
Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,
Bad husbands of their fires,

Who, when they gave thee breath,
Failed to bequeath
The needful sinew stark as once,
The Baresark marrow to thy bones,
But left a legacy of ebbing veins,
Inconstant heat and nerveless reins;
Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,
Amid the gladiators, halt and numb."

As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:
"Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed."

1867. *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

THE PROBLEM

I LIKE a church; I like a cowl;
I love a prophet of the soul;
And on my heart monastic aisles
Fall like sweet strains or pensive smiles:
Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowlèd churchman be.
Why should the vest on him allure,
Which I could not on me endure?

Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought;
Never from lips of cunning fell
The thrilling Delphic oracle;
Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old;
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below,—
The canticles of love and woe:
The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;—
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell?
Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads?
Such and so grew these holy piles,
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone;
And Morning opes with haste her lids,
To gaze upon the Pyramids;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends, with kindred eye;

For, out of Thought's interior sphere,
These wonders rose to upper air;
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.

These temples grew as grows the grass
Art might obey, but not surpass.
The passive Master lent his hand
To the vast Soul that o'er him planned;
And the same power that reared the
shrine
Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.
Ever the fiery Pentecost
Girds with one flame the countless host,
Trances the heart through chanting choirs,
And through the priest the mind inspires.
The word unto the prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.
One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.
I know what say the fathers wise,—
The Book itself before me lies,
Old *Chrysostom,* best Augustine,
And he who blent both in his line,
The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,
Taylor, the Shakespeare of divines.

His words are music in my ear,
I see his cowlèd portrait dear;
And yet, for all his faith could see,
I would not the good bishop be.

1840. *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

BRAHMA

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

1858. *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

IN A LECTURE-ROOM

Away, haunt thou not me,
Thou vain Philosophy!
Little hast thou bestead,
Save to perplex the head,
And leave the spirit dead.
Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,
While from the secret treasure-depths below,
Fed by the skiey shower,
And clouds that sink and rest on hill-tops high,
Wisdom at once, and Power,
Are welling, bubbling forth, unseen, incessantly?
Why labour at the dull mechanic oar,
When the fresh breeze is blowing,
And the strong current flowing,
Right onward to the Eternal Shore?

1840. 1849. *Arthur Hugh Clough.*

"SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH"

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

Self-dependence

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

1849. 1862. *Arthur Hugh Clough.*

SELF-DEPENDENCE

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
"Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;

Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:
"Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

1852. *Matthew Arnold.*

THE FUTURE

A WANDERER is man from his birth.
He was born in a ship
On the breast of the river of Time;
Brimming with wonder and joy
He spreads out his arms to the light,
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been,
Whether he wakes
Where the snowy mountainous pass,
Echoing the screams of the eagles,
Hems in its gorges the bed
Of the new-born clear-flowing stream;
Whether he first sees light
Where the river in gleaming rings
Sluggishly winds through the plain;
Whether in sound of the swallowing sea—
As is the world on the banks,
So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each, as he glides,
Fable and dream
Of the lands which the river of Time
Had left ere he woke on its breast,
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.
Only the tract where he sails

He wots of; only the thoughts,
Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green earth any more
As she was by the sources of Time?
Who imagines her fields as they lay
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough?
Who thinks as they thought,
The tribes who then roam'd on her breast,
Her vigorous primitive sons?
What girl
Now reads in her bosom as clear
As Rebekah read, when she sate
At eve by the palm-shaded well?
Who guards in her breast
As deep, as pellucid a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

What bard,
At the height of his vision, can deem
Of God, of the world, of the soul,
With a plainness as near,
As flashing as Moses felt
When he lay in the night by his flock
On the starlit Arabian waste?
Can rise and obey
The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the river of Time
Now flows through with us, is the plain.
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.
Border'd by cities and hoarse

With a thousand cries is its stream.
And we on its breast, our minds
Are confused as the cries which we hear,
Changing and shot as the sights which we see.

And we say that repose has fled
For ever the course of the river of Time.
That cities will crowd to its edge
In a blacker, incessanter line;
That the din will be more on its banks,
Denser the trade on its stream,
Flatter the plain where it flows,
Fiercer the sun overhead.
That never will those on its breast
See an ennobling sight,
Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed.

Haply, the river of Time—
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream—
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike

Peace to the soul of the man on its breast—
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

1852. *Matthew Arnold.*

PALLADIUM

Set where the upper streams of Simois flow
Was the Palladium, high 'mid rock and wood;
And Hector was in Ilium, far below,
And fought, and saw it not—but there it stood!

It stood, and sun and moonshine rain'd their light
On the pure columns of its glen-built hall.
Backward and forward roll'd the waves of fight
Round Troy—but while this stood, Troy could not fall.

So, in its lovely moonlight, lives the soul.
Mountains surround it and sweet virgin air;
Cold plashing, past it, crystal waters roll;
We visit it by moments, ah, too rare!

We shall renew the battle in the plain
To-morrow; red with blood will Xanthus be;
Hector and Ajax will be there again,
Helen will come upon the wall to see.

Then we shall rust in shade, or shine in strife,
And fluctuate 'twixt blind hopes and blind
despairs,
And fancy that we put forth all our life,
And never know how with the soul it fares.

Still doth the soul, from its long fastness high,
Upon our life a ruling effluence send.
And when it fails, fight as we will, we die;
And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.

1867. *Matthew Arnold.*

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the
light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England
stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and
fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

1867. *Matthew Arnold.*

GROWING OLD

What is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The lustre of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forego her wreath?
—Yes, but not this alone.

Is it to feel our strength—
Not our bloom only, but our strength—decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung?

Yes, this, and more; but not—
Ah, 't is not what in youth we dream'd 't would be!
'T is not to have our life
Mellow'd and soften'd as with sunset glow,
A golden day's decline.

'T is not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirr'd;
And weep, and feel the fulness of the past,
The years that are no more.

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young;
It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain.

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion—none.

It is—last stage of all—
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost
Which blamed the living man.

1867. *Matthew Arnold.*

WHAT RABBI JEHOSHA SAID

Rabbi Jehosha used to say
That God made angels every day,
Perfect as Michael and the rest
First brooded in creation's nest,
Whose only office was to cry
Hosanna! once, and then to die;
Or rather, with Life's essence blent,
To be led home from banishment.

The End of the Play

Rabbi Jehosha had the skill
To know that Heaven is in God's will;
And doing that, though for a space
One heart-beat long, may win a grace
As full of grandeur and of glow
As Princes of the Chariot know.

'T were glorious, no doubt, to be
One of the strong-winged Hierarchy,
To burn with Seraphs, or to shine
With Cherubs, deathlessly divine;
Yet I, perhaps, poor earthly clod,
Could I forget myself in God,
Could I but find my nature's clew
Simply as birds and blossoms do,
And but for one rapt moment know
'T is Heaven must come, not we must go,
Should win my place as near the throne
As the pearl-angel of its zone,
And God would listen mid the throng
For my one breath of perfect song,
That, in its simple human way,
Said all the Host of Heaven could say.

1868. *James Russell Lowell.*

THE END OF THE PLAY

The play is done; the curtain drops,
Slow falling to the prompter's bell:
A moment yet the actor stops,
And looks around, to say farewell.

It is an irksome word and task;
And, when he 's laughed and said his say,
He shows, as he removes the mask,
A face that 's anything but gay.

One word, ere yet the evening ends,
Let 's close it with a parting rhyme,
And pledge a hand to all young friends,
As fits the merry Christmas time.
On life's wide scene you, too, have parts,
That fate erelong shall bid you play;
Good night! with honest gentle hearts
A kindly greeting go alway!

Good night!—I 'd say, the griefs, the joys,
Just hinted in this mimic page,
The triumphs and defeats of boys,
Are but repeated in our age.
I 'd say, your woes were not less keen,
Your hopes more vain, than those of men;
Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen
At forty-five played o'er again.

I 'd say, we suffer and we strive,
Not less nor more as men than boys;
With grizzled beards at forty-five,
As erst at twelve in corduroys.
And if, in time of sacred youth,
We learned at home to love and pray,
Pray Heaven that early Love and Truth
May never wholly pass away.

And in the world, as in the school,
I 'd say, how fate may change and shift;
The prize be sometimes with the fool,
The race not always to the swift.
The strong may yield, the good may fall,
The great man be a vulgar clown,
The knave be lifted over all,
The kind cast pitilessly down.

Who knows the inscrutable design?
Blessèd be He who took and gave!
Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,
Be weeping at her darling's grave?
We bow to Heaven that will'd it so,
That darkly rules the fate of all,
That sends the respite or the blow,
That 's free to give, or to recall.

This crown his feast with wine and wit:
Who brought him to that mirth and state?
His betters, see, below him sit,
Or hunger hopeless at the gate.
Who bade the mud from Dives' wheel
To spurn the rags of Lazarus?
Come, brother, in that dust we 'll kneel,
Confessing Heaven that ruled it thus.

So each shall mourn, in life's advance,
Dear hopes, dear friends, untimely killed;
Shall grieve for many a forfeit chance,
And longing passion unfulfilled.

Amen! whatever fate be sent,
Pray God the heart may kindly glow,
Although the head with cares be bent,
And whitened with the winter snow.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will,
And bear it with an honest heart,
Who misses or who wins the prize.
Go, lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

A gentleman, or old or young!
(Bear kindly with my humble lays);
The sacred chorus first was sung
Upon the first of Christmas days:
The shepherds heard it overhead—
The joyful angels raised it then:
Glory to Heaven on high, it said,
And peace on earth to gentle men!

My song, save this, is little worth;
I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health, and love, and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmastide.
As fits the holy Christmas birth,
Be this, good friends, our carol still—
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will.

1848-9. *William Makepeace Thackeray.*

SELECTIONS FROM THE LATER POETRY

Descriptive and Reflective Verse

Interpretation of Nature
Portraits of People
Poems in Character
Life's Philosophy

WINGS*

GRAY gulls that wheeled and dipped and rose
Where tossing crests like Alpine snows
Would shimmer and entice;

A stormy petrel, Judas soul,
Dark wanderer of the waste, whose goal
No mariner hath seen;

And flaming from the vanished sun
A wondrous wing vermilion,
A bird of paradise,

A soaring wing that shone so far
The orient horizon bar
Flushed, and the sea between

Like an Arabian carpet glowed
With changeful hues where subtly flowed
Some magical device;

And one pale plume in heaven's dim dome
Above that fairy-colored foam,
The new moon's ghostly sheen.

Katharine Lee Bates.

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SALUTE TO THE TREES

MANY a tree is found in the wood
And every tree for its use is good;
Some for the strength of the gnarled root,
Some for the sweetness of flower or fruit;
Some for shelter against the storm,
And some to keep the hearth-stone warm.
Some for the roof, and some for the beam,
And some for a boat to breast the stream:
In the wealth of the wood since the world began
The trees have offered their gifts to man.

But the glory of trees is more than their gifts;
'Tis a beautiful wonder of life that lifts
From a wrinkled seed in an earth-bound clod.
A column, an arch in the temple of God,—
A pillar of power, a dome of delight,
A shrine of song, and a joy of sight!
Their roots are the nurses of rivers in birth
Their leaves are alive with the breath of the earth;
They shelter the dwellings of man; and they bend
O'er his grave with the look of a loving friend.

I have camped in the whispering forest of pines,
I have slept in the shadow of olives and vines;
In the knees of an oak, at the foot of a palm
I have found good rest and slumber's balm.

And now, when the morning gilds the boughs
Of the vaulted elm at the door of my house,
I open the window and make salute:
"God bless thy branches and feed thy root!
Thou hast lived before, live after me,
Thou ancient, friendly, faithful tree."

Henry van Dyke.

THE CHANT OF THE COLORADO

(*At the Grand Canyon*)

My brother, man, shapes him a plan
And builds him a house in a day,
But I have toiled through a million years
For a home to last alway.
I have flooded the sands and washed them down,
I have cut through gneiss and granite.
No toiler of earth has wrought as I,
Since God's first breath began it.
High mountain-buttes I have chiselled, to shade
My wanderings to the sea.
With the wind's aid, and the cloud's aid,
Unweary and mighty and unafraid,
I have bodied eternity.

My brother, man, builds for a span:
His life is a moment's breath.
But I have hewn for a million years,
Nor a moment dreamt of death.
By moons and stars I have measured my task—
And some of the skies have perished:

But ever I cut and flashed and foamed,
  As ever my aim I cherished:
My aim to quarry the heart of earth,
  Till, in the rock's red rise,
Its age and birth, through an awful girth
Of strata, should show the wonder-worth
  Of patience to all eyes.

My brother, man, builds as he can,
  And beauty he adds for his joy,
But all the hues of sublimity
  My pinnacled walls employ.
Slow shadows iris them all day long,
  And silvery veils, soul-stilling,
The moon drops down their precipices,
  Soft with a spectral thrilling.
For all immutable dreams that sway
  With beauty the earth and air,
Are ever at play, by night and day,
My house of eternity to array
  In visions ever fair.

Cale Young Rice.

A DEAD HARVEST

In Kensington Gardens

ALONG the graceless grass of town
They rake the rows of red and brown—
Dead leaves, unlike the rows of hay
Delicate, touched with gold and grey,
Raked long ago and far away.

Check

A narrow silence in the park,
Between the lights a narrow dark.
One street rolls on the north; and one,
Muffled, upon the south doth run;
Amid the mist the work is done.

A futile crop! for it the fire
Smoulders, and, for a stack, a pyre.
So go the town's lives on the breeze,
Even as the sheddings of the trees;
Bosom nor barn is filled with these.

Alice Meynell.

CHECK

THE night was creeping on the ground;
She crept and did not make a sound
Until she reached the tree, and then
She covered it, and stole again
Along the grass beside the wall.

I heard the rustle of her shawl
As she threw blackness everywhere
Upon the sky and ground and air,
And in the room where I was hid:
But no matter what she did
To everything that was without,
She could not put my candle out.

So I stared at the night, and she
Stared back solemnly at me.

James Stephens.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE*

Written after seeing Millet's painting of the stoopt figure of the Hoe-man.

God made man in His own image, in the image of God made He him.—GENESIS.

BOWED by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—

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More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quencht?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers of the lands,
How will the Future reckon with this man?
How answer his brute question in that hour

When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shapt him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

Edwin Markham.

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE*

WHEN the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of Earth,
Dashed through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixed a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—behind the mortal veil.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth,
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;

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The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West,
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The grip that swung the axe in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,

He held the ridgepole up, and spikt again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

Edwin Markham.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

(In Springfield, Illinois)

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high-top hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:—as in times before!

And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

Vachel Lindsay.

THE GIPSY GIRL

"Come, try your skill, kind gentlemen,
A penny for three tries!"
Some threw and lost, some threw and won
A ten-a-penny prize.

She was a tawny gipsy girl,
A girl of twenty years,
I liked her for the lumps of gold
That jingled from her ears;

I liked the flaring yellow scarf
Bound loose about her throat,
I liked her showy purple gown
And flashy velvet coat.

A man came up, too loose of tongue,
And said no good to her;
She did not blush as Saxons do,
Or turn upon the cur;

She fawned and whined "Sweet gentleman,
A penny for three tries!"
—But oh, the den of wild things in
The darkness of her eyes!

Ralph Hodgson.

SONGS FOR MY MOTHER

I

Her Hands

My Mother's hands are cool and fair,
They can do anything,
Delicate mercies hide them there
Like flowers in the spring.

Songs for My Mother

When I was small and could not sleep,
  She used to come to me,
And with my cheek upon her hand
  How sure my rest would be.

For everything she ever touched
  Of beautiful or fine,
Their memories living in her hands
  Would warm that sleep of mine.

Her hands remember how they played
  One time in meadow streams,
And all the flickering song and shade
  Of water took my dreams.

Swift through her haunted fingers pass
  Memories of garden things;
I dipped my face in flowers and grass
  And sounds of hidden wings.

One time she touched the cloud that kissed
  Brown pastures bleak and far;
I leaned my cheek into a mist
  And thought I was a star.

All this was very long ago
  And I am grown; but yet
The hand that lured my slumber so
  I never can forget.

For still when drowsiness comes on
  It seems so soft and cool,

Shaped happily beneath my cheek,
  Hollow and beautiful.

II

Her Words

My mother has the prettiest tricks
  Of words and words and words.
Her talk comes out as smooth and sleek
  As breasts of singing birds.

She shapes her speech all silver fine
  Because she loves it so.
And her own eyes begin to shine
  To hear her stories grow.

And if she goes to make a call
  Or out to take a walk
We leave our work when she returns
  And run to hear her talk.

We had not dreamed these things were so
  Of sorrow and of mirth.
Her speech is as a thousand eyes
  Through which we see the earth.

God wove a web of loveliness,
  Of clouds and stars and birds,
But made not any thing at all
  So beautiful as words.

Vickery's Mountain

They shine around our simple earth
With golden shadowings,
And every common thing they touch
Is exquisite with wings.

There's nothing poor and nothing small
But is made fair with them.
They are the hands of living faith
That touch the garment's hem.

They are as fair as bloom or air,
They shine like any star,
And I am rich who learned from her
How beautiful they are.

Anna Hempstead Branch.

VICKERY'S MOUNTAIN*

BLUE in the west the mountain stands,
And through the long twilight
Vickery sits with folded hands,
And Vickery's eyes are bright.

Bright, for he knows what no man else
On earth as yet may know:
There's a golden word that he never tells,
And a gift that he will not show.

*From "The Town Down the River"; copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

He dreams of honor and wealth and fame,
  He smiles, and well he may;
For to Vickery once a sick man came
  Who did not go away.

The day before the day to be,
  "Vickery," said the guest,
"You know as you live what's left of me—
  And you shall know the rest.

"You know as you live that I have come
  To what we call the end.
No doubt you have found me troublesome.
  But you've also found a friend;

"For we shall give and you shall take
  The gold that is in view;
The mountain there and I shall make
  A golden man of you.

"And you shall leave a friend behind
  Who neither frets nor feels;
And you shall move among your kind
  With hundreds at your heels.

"Now this that I have written here
  Tells all that need be told;
So, Vickery, take the way that's clear,
  And be a man of gold."

Vickery turned his eyes again
  To the far mountain-side,

And wept a tear for worthy men
  Defeated and defied.

Since then a crafty score of years
  Have come, and they have gone;
But Vickery counts no lost arrears:
  He lingers and lives on.

Blue in the west the mountain stands,
  Familiar as a face.
Blue, but Vickery knows what sands
  Are golden at its base.

He dreams and lives upon the day
  When he shall walk with kings.
Vickery smiles—and well he may:
  The life-caged linnet sings.

Vickery thinks the time will come
  To go for what is his;
But hovering, unseen hands at home
  Will hold him where he is.

There's a golden word that he never tells
  And a gift that he will not show.
All to be given to some one else—
  And Vickery not to know.

Edwin Arlington Robinson.

OLD GREY SQUIRREL

A GREAT while ago, there was a school-boy.
He lived in a cottage by the sea.
And the very first thing he could remember
Was the rigging of the schooners by the quay.

He could watch them, when he woke, from his window,
With the tall cranes hoisting out the freight.
And he used to think of shipping as a sea-cook,
And sailing to the Golden Gate.

For he used to buy the yellow penny dreadfuls,
And read them where he fished for conger eels,
And listened to the lapping of the water,
And the green and oily water round the keels.

There were trawlers with their shark-mouthed flat-fish,
And red nets hanging out to dry,
And the skate the skipper kept because he liked 'em,
And the landsmen never knew the fish to fry.

Old Grey Squirrel

There were brigantines with timber out of Norroway,
Oozing with the syrups of the pine.
There were rusty dusty schooners out of Sunderland,
And ships of the Blue Cross line.

And to tumble down a hatch into the cabin
Was better than the best of broken rules;
For the smell of 'em was like a Christmas dinner,
And the feel of 'em was like a box of tools.

And, before he went to sleep in the evening,
The very last thing that he could see
Was the sailor-men a-dancing in the moonlight
By the capstan that stood upon the quay.

He is perched upon a high stool in London.
The Golden Gate is very far away.
They caught him, and they caged him, like a squirrel.
He is totting up accounts, and going grey.

He will never, never, never sail to 'Frisco.
But the very last thing that he will see
Will be sailor-men a-dancing in the sunrise
By the capstan that stands upon the quay. . . .

To the tune of an old concertina,
By the capstan that stands upon the quay.

Alfred Noyes.

ISAIAH BEETHOVEN*

THEY told me I had three months to live,
So I crept to Bernadotte,
And sat by the mill for hours and hours
Where the gathered waters deeply moving
Seemed not to move:
O world, that's you!
You are but a widened place in the river
Where Life looks down and we rejoice for her
Mirrored in us, and so we dream
And turn away, but when again
We look for the face, behold the low-lands
And blasted cotton-wood trees where we empty
Into the larger stream!
But here by the mill the castled clouds
Mocked themselves in the dizzy water;
And over its agate floor at night
The flame of the moon ran under my eyes
Amid a forest stillness broken
By a flute in a hut on the hill.
At last when I came to lie in bed
Weak and in pain, with the dreams about me,
The soul of the river had entered my soul,

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And the gathered power of my soul was moving
So swiftly it seemed to be at rest
Under cities of cloud and under
Spheres of silver and changing worlds—
Until I saw a flash of trumpets
Above the battlements over Time!

Edgar Lee Masters.

RICHARD CORY*

WHENEVER Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich,—yes, richer than a king,—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

*From "The Children of the Night"; copyright, 1896, 1897, by Edwin Arlington Robinson; published by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Edwin Arlington Robinson.

THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,
  Folk dance like a wave of the sea;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
  My brother in Moharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin:
  They read in their books of prayer;
I read in my book of songs
  I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time,
  To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old spirits,
  But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,
  Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle,
  And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With "Here is the fiddler of Dooney!"
And dance like a wave of the sea.

W. B. Yeats.

AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS*

O to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down!
A dresser filled with shining delft,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delft!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,

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And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house—a house of my own—
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

Padraic Colum.

SHE HEARS THE STORM

THERE was a time in former years—
  While my roof-tree was his—
When I should have been distressed by fears
  At such a night as this.

I should have murmured anxiously,
  "The pricking rain strikes cold;
His road is bare of hedge or tree,
  And he is getting old."

But now the fitful chimney-roar,
  The drone of Thorncombe trees,
The Froom in flood upon the moor,
  The mud of Mellstock Leaze,

The candle slanting sooty wick'd,
  The thuds upon the thatch,
The eaves-drops on the window flicked,
  The clacking garden-hatch,

And what they mean to wayfarers,
I scarcely heed or mind;
He has won that storm-tight roof of hers
Which Earth grants all her kind.

Thomas Hardy.

"GRANDMITHER, THINK NOT I FORGET"

GRANDMITHER, think not I forget, when I come back to town,
An' wander the old ways again, an' tread them up and down.
I never smell the clover bloom, nor see the swallows pass,
Wi'out I mind how good ye were unto a little lass;
I never hear the winter rain a-pelting all night through
Wi'out I think and mind me of how cold it falls on you.
An' if I come not often to your bed beneath the thyme,
Mayhap 't is that I'd change wi' ye, and gie my bed for thine,
Would like to sleep in thine.

I never hear the summer winds among the roses blow
Wi'out I wonder why it was ye loved the lassie so.
Ye gave me cakes and lollipops and pretty toys a score—

I never thought I should come back and ask ye now for more.
Grandmither, gie me your still white hands that lie upon your breast,
For mine do beat the dark all night and never find me rest;
They grope among the shadows an' they beat the cold black air,
They go seekin' in the darkness, an' they never find him there,
They never find him there.

Grandmither, gie me your sightless eyes, that I may never see
His own a-burnin' full o' love that must not shine for me.
Grandmither, gie me your peaceful lips, white as the kirkyard snow,
For mine be tremblin' wi' the wish that he must never know.
Grandmither, gie me your clay-stopped ears, that I may never hear
My lad a-singin' in the night when I am sick wi' fear;
A-singin' when the moonlight over a' the land is white—
Ah, God! I'll up and go to him, a-singin' in the night,
A-callin' in the night.

Grandmither, gie me your clay-cold heart, that has forgot to ache,

For mine be fire wi'in my breast an' yet it cannot break.
Wi' every beat it's callin' for things that must not be,—
So can ye not let me creep in an' rest awhile by ye?
A little lass afeard o' dark slept by ye years agone—
An' she has found what night can hold 'twixt sunset an' the dawn:
So when I plant the rose an' rue above your grave for ye,
Ye'll know it's under rue an' rose that I would like to be,
That I would like to be.

Willa Sibert Cather.

HAROLD BEFORE SENLAC*

THE TRAGEDY OF A PATRIOT

BROTHER, you marvel why I sit alone,
Upon the eve of battle, and speak not;
Yet hath a gift of dreadful sight been given,
To me, and speech I scarcely understand.
On Senlac Hill my host shall be o'erthrown,
I see myself fallen blinded to the ground.
Now it is borne on me that I must die.
My single life defers the Eternal will.
For it is fated that the Norman blood
With Saxon shall be mingled happily

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And dead foes on the slope shall fraternise;
And from the wine blood-red tomorrow spilled
Shall spring a fortunate vintage of the earth
And a great brew from battle shall be made,
Till from that mingling shall an Empire rise
Vaster than any gazed on by the sun;
My life alone this solemn marriage mars
Of nations, and the purposed fusion stops,
Since while I lived England to me were true.
I stand, it seems, in the great path of Fate,
And by my dying must make clear her way
Till with the years and mellowing touch of time
The Norman close with Saxon shall be knit,
And stand together in the clash of arms
On many a foreign plain and alien hill
And in one host shall conquer and o'erthrow;
In solid square or charging fury grown
Invincible, archers that with their bolt
Shall bring a sudden darkness on the foe,
And many fields in glory shall be won.
Then shall this people feel for the furthest seas,
And tempt the very foam of fairyland,
And ultimate oceans, and the very deep
Shall be as a playfield underneath their feet.
And they shall plunge Armadas in the ooze,
England shall queen the waters of the world.
Then shall she lay her hand upon the east,
And the huge orient with a remnant grasp,
A glimmering shore of pearl and emerald,
A strand of throbbing glory and of gold,
Tribes in full stare of Phœbus and aspects
Into a dimness kissed by splendid suns,
And million turbaned peoples shall she rule.

Nor here alone shall England prosper; she
A mighty river shall ascend by night,
And with the morn a new dominion seize,
Cradle of heroes, radiant, snowy clear;
And on her builded Empire never sun
Shall set, nor any star refuse to rise.
But I perceive my doom and acquiesce.
World-Destiny, no less, requires my death,
And so shall one man for the people die.
But brother be thou well assured of this,
That never Fate, nor ever curse of Rome
Shall loose my knees, or make this heart to quail.
I will not fall without much Norman blood,
The Roman curse shall string this arm to steel,
The doom of Fate give edge unto this axe;
Dying I will be liberal with death,
I will not pass alone, but with me I
Will take great company into the dark.
Now pass we through our lines, ere the light warns.

Stephen Phillips.

SOULS*

My soul goes clad in gorgeous things,
Scarlet and gold and blue;
And at her shoulder sudden wings
Like long flames flicker through.

And she is swallow-fleet, and free
From mortal bonds and bars.

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She laughs, because Eternity
  Blossoms for her with stars!

O folk who scorn my stiff gray gown,
  My dull and foolish face,
Can ye not see my Soul flash down,
  A singing flame through space?

And folk, whose earth-stained looks I hate,
  Why may I not divine
Your Souls, that must be passionate,
  Shining and swift, as mine!

Fannie Stearns Davis.

THE HAPPIEST HEART

WHO drives the horses of the sun
  Shall lord it but a day;
Better the lowly deed were done,
  And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,
  The dust will hide the crown;
Aye, none shall nail so high his name
  Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
  Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet,
  And left to Heaven the rest.

John Vance Cheney.